

Back to the Gold Standard?

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Unfailingly, a change in administrations has a buoyant effect on the American spirit. All too often, though, this uplift is short-lived. We are a people impatient to get things done, quick to sour on our own leaders and institutions.

We demand so much of our government and those who lead it. We lose sight of what government actually is: an instrumentality of the *people*; a means by which we the people meet our objectives. We expect the Oval Office to turn men into miracle makers, forgetting that no President can achieve what is beyond the will and purpose of the people.

What is their will? By their votes last November, Americans indicated the course they want the nation to take under its new leadership. It embraces these needs:

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- Building our economic might through a revitalized system of free enterprise disciplined by the competitive forces of the marketplace.

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The time has come for renewal and rededication. For too many, the American dream has taken on tarnish. It needs burnishing. There is much to be done and undone. Let us begin.

Godspeed, Mr. President.



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The Isolated Location. It's safest to park in a locked garage, but if you can't, don't leave your car in a dark, out-of-the-way spot. Instead, try to park on a busy, well-lighted street. Thieves shy away from tampering with a car if there's a high risk of being spotted.

The Display Case. There's nothing more inviting to a thief than expensive items lying in your car, in plain sight. If you lock these items in the trunk or glove box, there's less incentive for a thief to break in. Also, when you park in a commercial lot or garage, be cautious. Lock your valuables in the trunk, and leave only the ignition key with the attendant.

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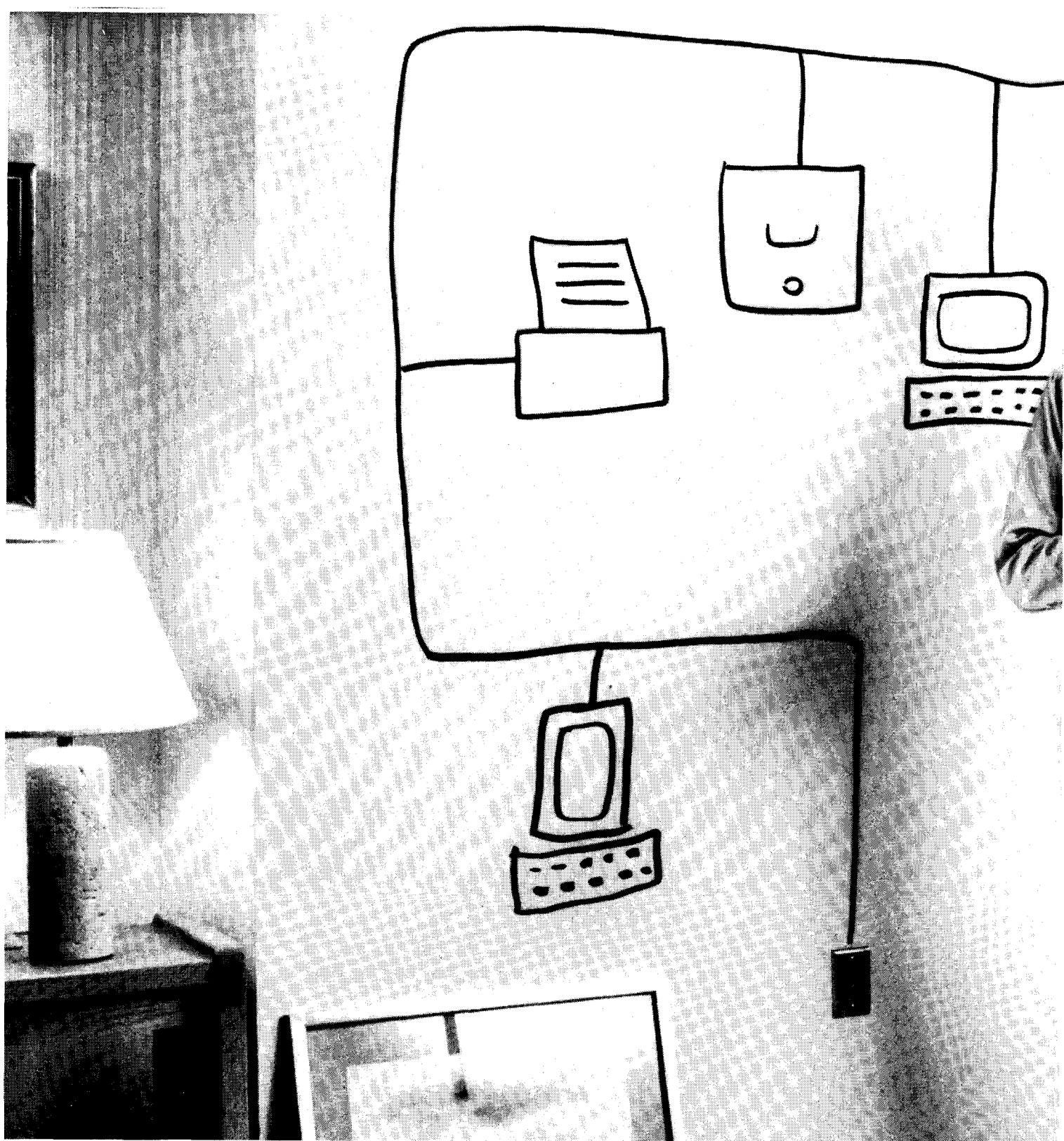
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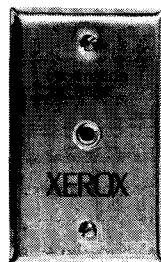
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REPORTS & COMMENT

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: The Party Is in Control



A stagnant economy and oppressive monitoring by Communist functionaries have reduced the once buoyant Czechs to frustration and resignation.

At an outdoor café in one of Czechoslovakia's larger cities this past summer, a woman looked up from her coffee and ice cream, her eyes wide. "You don't know how much I envy you these things," she said, as she thumbed through a recent Joan Didion novel I had brought with me from New York.

When I showed a copy of the New York Times, however, everyone at the table reacted in a way I came to understand all too well in this Eastern European socialist country. They squirmed in their chairs, looking anxiously at the other tables to see if anyone was watching. One man turned gray and ran his finger under his collar as if sweating. Yet they would not ask me directly to put the paper away. Soon I got the message and stuffed the paper back inside my briefcase. The bubble of tension evaporated.

"We never imagined that they would

take away everything," said Milena K., a former newspaper editor. She leaned forward and lowered her voice. "After the Russians came [in 1968], they did very little at first. But now it becomes worse and worse each year—harder to travel or get news and magazines from the West. Little by little they have clamped down. They are taking away every trace of the freedom we won before 1968 and under Dubček. Now there is almost nothing left. And there is no hope."

At first glance, this depressing view seems unjustified. To a Western visitor, Czechoslovakia is a clean, safe country where no one goes without adequate food, shelter, or education. The restaurants, *kavarnas*, and *vinarnas* are filled with good-natured people eating knedliky (dumplings) with small portions of meat, drinking the famous Czech beer, and exchanging upbeat chatter. If a table has an empty place, you ask permission with a gesture and are invited to sit down. Soon you are all chatting together, if a common language can be found. And with some Czech soldiers, whose only foreign language is Russian, you can discuss the atmospheric side effects of the Mt. St. Helens eruption by means of drawings, hand signs, a Czech-English dictionary, and much willingness to communicate.

Fifteen years had passed since I had last visited this nation of 10 million Czechs and 5 million Slovaks, tucked like a keystone among the Warsaw Pact nations of East Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, and Hungary on its northern, eastern, and southern borders. On the southwest and west it touches Austria and West Germany, close enough to whet the Czechoslovak appetite for the free and prosperous life seen via Western television stations. And with thousands of Soviet troops still garrisoned in camps only a few dozen kilometers from Prague, the closeness of the world beyond the Iron Curtain is tantalizing.

Czechoslovakia is the consumer's paradise of the Eastern bloc. Many families own their own Skoda car; most Czechs dress as well as average working-class Americans; new highways and modern public housing are being built. Yet an oppressive mood and a sense of stagnation and hopelessness prevailed among the dozens of people I spoke with. The feeling of oppression is not a consequence of jackbooted soldiers with whips beating people in the streets. On the contrary, Czech police and soldiers

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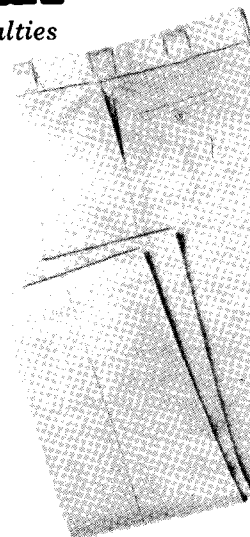
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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

are rather meek looking, generally polite, and easier to negotiate with than their rigidly businesslike counterparts in democratic West Germany.

The fear in this country comes from a secondary control, a system of records and checks that build up over the years and weigh heavily on anyone who isn't a model socialist citizen. No one will be beaten or arrested for wearing a cross, attending church, or associating with dissidents. But when permission is needed to travel abroad, get an apartment, or move into a higher position at work, the path may be blocked. Even attendance at a university depends on the records. Did you go to the Communist Youth League (SSM) meetings regularly? Did you sign the petition denouncing the signers of the Charter 77 on human rights (though no copy was available and you didn't even know what it contained)?

After thirteen years of tight control by the Communist party of all aspects of academic, economic, cultural, and personal life, Czechs have begun to escape from the country in increasing numbers. Last summer, Western embassies in Vienna reported they were "flooded" with requests for immigration permits. The Austrian government reported triple the rate of defections from Czechoslovakia, and the Traiskirchen refugee center outside Vienna was overflowing with families seeking immigration permits and cash to go to Australia, Canada, and the United States (in that order of popularity). As many as 30,000 Czechs defected last year, one Czech former diplomat estimated.

The pulsing discontent under the surface calm of Czechoslovakia's ancient villages and towns seems unlikely to provoke a Polish-worker-style strike or a repetition of the 1968 intellectuals' movement for "socialism with a human face." Instead, the Czechs are abandoning the hills and cities of Moravia and Bohemia to strike out on their own.

Czechs surround their homes with flowers, even growing them on public strips of earth between the sidewalk and the street. As you enter an apartment you are asked to remove your shoes and are given slippers. While waiting for the grounds to settle in your cup of black, Turkish-style coffee, you sense an aura of civilization and culture, even in village homes, that is strangely familiar. As I observed the

inevitable "wall furniture"—floor-to-ceiling sets of cabinets and glass-enclosed shelves revealing books and painted pottery, silver cups and family photographs—I recognized the lifestyle that my grandparents brought from the "old country." This is a land of cobbled streets, clay-tiled roofs, and Gothic towers above the vaulted passageways running around the squares. It is a land where the longest lines form not for watermelons and fresh vegetables but for new books when they are put on sale in the bookstores each Thursday afternoon.

Yet this is no longer the Czechoslovakia of the middle sixties. Though for the first time many are driving cars, and the Slovaks are freed from the bondage of hand agriculture, Czechs face their own energy crisis, rising divorce and abortion rates, ten-year waits for housing.

"Nice clothes and cars don't mean everything," one medical student told me over a glass of orange-amber beer. He pointed to the article about Afghanistan in *Rudé Právo*, the Communist party daily, which he had been helping me translate. "When I see that shit, it makes me sick and sad," he said. The article told about the killing of "bandits" by the Soviet-backed Afghan army. Czechs are all too aware of what is going on there, being skilled at reading between the lines of government reportage. And they know they are powerless to oppose the Soviet Union.

Czechs are no strangers to foreign domination. They were vassals of the Austro-Hungarians for 500 years until the breakup of that empire in World War I. Thomas G. Masaryk headed the first Czechoslovakian republic, whose independence in 1918 led to an outpouring of creativity by native writers such as Karel Čapek and Franz Kafka, musicians such as Leos Janáček, and painters and architects. The best of them died during the Nazi occupation that began after Munich in 1938 and continued until Russian soldiers and tanks liberated Prague in May 1945. American forces had advanced as far as Plzeň, but held back to let the Soviets enter Prague in accordance with the Yalta Pact.

The postwar democratic government formed by Edward Beneš and Jan Masaryk (son of Thomas) struggled for three years to remain independent. But in March 1948, Jan Masaryk was hurled to his death from a window, and

the Communist party took full control of the government under the heavy-handed Clement Gottwald.

As for Thomas G. Masaryk, he "never existed" according to the Communists, and his name does not appear in textbooks or histories because he failed to accept the Marxist ideology that took hold in Russia during his lifetime. The last statue of him has been moved from the town square of Vyškov in Moravia to a lawn at a nearby castle, where it stands atop a bare stone cube. No name identifies the man in the overcoat, but the people know who he is.

The brief flowering of freedom in 1968 under Alexander Dubček, known to the West as the "Prague Spring," is described in current guidebooks as the time when "right-wing forces endeavored to revoke the [socialist] development, but with the assistance of the countries of the Warsaw Agreement, their efforts were defeated." On August 21, 1968, Soviet and Warsaw Pact armored divisions tore up roads and shook houses as they occupied the country. Dubček was forced to repudiate publicly the abolition of censorship and other reforms, and was banished to a minor job in his native Slovakia, his name, like that of Masaryk, stricken from the nation's history books.

When I asked Jana R., a nurse in the mining city of Ostrava, whether the younger generation remembers Dubček, she refused to answer until we had walked some distance from any passersby who might have heard me pronounce that name. "He did not exist. At least that is what the new history books say. I have some of the old books that were published in the sixties, and one, by Milan Kundera [now in exile], tells of life in the fifties, how children were made to tell on what their parents talked about at home. And I am telling you that now it is becoming again like that.

"No one trusts anyone anymore. We stay at home and turn more into the family. I know what the West is like because I have been to Italy, but I do not tell my friends at work that I have been to the West. I think some of my friends have other books that are 'censura' [banned] or not printed anymore—by Kafka and other writers—but I am afraid to ask for them."

Jana said she would like to escape, but worries about her parents and her brother (with his wife and child), who share a flat with her. Once she goes, they might never be able to leave, and

might be blocked in their careers and in their search for housing. Those who defect can eventually return to visit Czechoslovakia after they become citizens of their adopted nations and pay back the Czech government for their education (generally between \$2000 and \$10,000).

Petr B. lives in a suburb of Prague and is afraid of the old woman living on the ground floor of his house. She watches his mail and knows when he gets letters from abroad. When a car with foreign registration drops him off, she takes note. When he fails to put out red flags for national holidays, she again makes a note. She wrote about these things to the block committee, which entered her letter in Petr's permanent record. If the flags fail to appear two or three times running (and Petr has no excuse), an "agit-prop" couple will come to visit him and urge him "for his own good" to be patriotic and obedient.

In addition to the block committee, Petr and all other Czechs have two more records: one at their place of employment, and the other at the Interior Ministry. These contain complete work records and biographical data plus allegations and overheard conversations reported by the million or so (the real figure is withheld) Party members scattered in every shop, school, nursing ward, and construction site. No one can see his own records, and when a visa or a job promotion is denied, no explanation is given. The result is that people stop trusting friends, become increasingly prudent, and struggle to reduce even the suspicion of disloyalty to a government and system apparently almost universally despised.

In Prague and in Vienna as well, Czechs argue whether it is politics or economics that drives so many abroad these days. Perhaps the answer is that when the economy turns sour, political issues such as censorship and closed borders seem increasingly unbearable.

The Czech economy is reeling from the disastrous 1979 winter, rising oil prices, gasoline selling at nearly \$4 per gallon, and aging industrial plants. Because Czechoslovakia surrendered to the Germans, the country was spared the destruction of cities and industries that Poland and other European nations experienced. But now the old plants gobble energy and raw materials

at higher rates than the newer plants in neighboring nations.

The major problem with the economy, according to Eastern European specialist Tibor Vais of Harvard's Russian Research Center, is fear of the word "reform" after what happened in 1968. For the first five years after 1968, the lack of innovation was "stabilizing," but in the past few years "stabilization" has become "stagnation," according to Vais. And real income is falling as Soviet-supplied oil takes a bigger bite out of the economy.

Vais cites the Russian view that the Czech economy is too diverse and needs to specialize in order to master modern technology. But a recent decision to specialize and shift 40 percent of their engineering efforts to the production of parts for nuclear power plants (for the Eastern bloc) ties them even more closely to their "Eastern neighbor." The rubles, zlotys, Hungarian forints, and East German marks they earn are "soft" currencies, useless in Western markets. Czechoslovakia has become an industrial colony, taking from its imperial master raw materials such as iron ore, oil, and gas, and selling shoes and other manufactured items in return, under binding, long-term trade agreements.

What few items Czechoslovakia has left for trade with the West that still meet international competitive standards fail to offset the drain of foreign currency from increased agricultural imports. American feed grains cost the Czechs \$500 million in 1980, ten times the 1977 figure. But exports to the U.S. dropped to \$50 million in 1979, according to a report by the American Embassy in Prague. As a result, the importation from the West of technical magazines and measuring instruments needed for research and development has been halted in many sectors, making it harder than ever to break out of the cycle that has cost the Czechs their international reputation as the people with the "golden hands." The quality of Czech goods is also declining.

One hears here, as in all the socialist countries, stories about labor and production. Workers come late, drink coffee or beer all day, and race home to work on their private gardens. Materials disappear from state job sites; people say, "If you don't steal from the state then the state steals from you."

The historic Tyn church and dozens of other buildings in Prague have been draped in rusty iron scaffolding for ten

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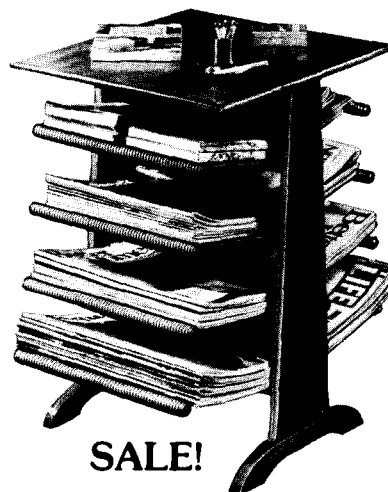
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years because the scaffolding installers had goals to meet. But not nearly enough workers are available for the restoration, which drags on.

A cement truck arrives unwanted at a construction site. It had been ordered by "the plan" but the carpenters are not ready. The cement workers aren't responsible to the carpenters, so the cement must be poured out, wanted or not.

A man charged with the export of machinery rented a warehouse in West Germany where he stores the machines. His job is simply to see that they leave Czechoslovakia, and he doesn't care if they are sold or not.

A shop selling the famous Czech-cut crystal is closed for inventory during the month of July, the height of the tourist season.

Waitresses and barkeepers deliberately slow down service in the last week of a busy summer month so that they won't surpass their sales goals and be assigned higher goals the following month.

Few Westerners visit Czechoslovakia, discouraged by the \$15 per day they are required to change at the inflated official exchange rate of nine korun to the dollar. The flourishing

black market offers up to twenty-two korun for the same dollar. Western tourism is also dampened by strict visa procedures with long lines at consulates, waiting periods if shipment by mail is required, and staff poorly trained in languages other than Czech. Of the 42,000 Americans who visited the country in 1979, about half came to see relatives, according to American Embassy officials. Most of the rest were on one- or two-day group tours with little opportunity to explore on their own.

All this suits the government, which is not enthusiastic about the prospect of thousands of Americans tainting their world view with stories of Western affluence and freedom. Yet the Czechs say that the absence of Americans and the dearth of news in the West about Czechoslovakia make them believe the West has abandoned them to their Eastern-bloc fate.

Jana has a different perspective: "It is so sad and depressing here because our past is torn up and there is nothing to look forward to. Under socialism there is no history. There are only the seasons of the year."

—JOHN STONE

wages should reflect this, is as old as Thomas Aquinas's reflections on the concept of the "just price." And it's easy to point to instances in which pay differences seem to have little or no relation to differences in "job worth." For example, in New York City, a public elementary school teacher with an M.A. degree has an entry-level salary of \$12,979, while a sanitation worker without even a high school diploma makes \$14,075 to start. A teacher with a B.A. makes a starting salary of \$10,981, considerably less than the \$15,619 paid to beginning police officers or fire fighters, who often have only a high school diploma. In New Jersey, an entry-level state librarian with a master's degree earns \$13,408, not much more than a beginning motor-vehicle examiner with no high school diploma (who earns \$10,423), and considerably less than a novice dealer in an Atlantic City casino—who can expect to rake in \$22,000 a year after eight to twelve weeks' training in dealer school.

Feminist advocates of job worth—or "comparable worth," as it's sometimes called—argue not only that pay should reflect the worth of a job but also that pay differences are often the result of sex discrimination by employers. For example, the Denver nurses complained that in 1974 the city paid a graduate nurse a beginning salary of \$725 a month, no more than the starting pay for the predominantly male job of gardener-florist. Worse still, they added, the gardener-florist could receive pay increases to a total salary of \$950 per month, while the graduate nurse's salary could rise only to \$908.

In another comparable-worth case, female clerical workers at the University of Northern Iowa made similar claims, comparing secretaries with painters, and library assistants with boiler-room operators:

- William Cooney, a painter, was hired in 1969, the same year that Nadine McComb joined the secretarial staff. The university's job-classification system judged their jobs to be of equal value and classified both in the same labor grade. However, between 1970 and 1977, Cooney was paid a total of \$17,535 more than McComb.

- Betty Stover, a secretary hired in 1945 and classified in the same grade as Cooney and McComb, earned a total of \$9087 less than the painter during the period 1970 to 1977.

- David Lang was hired as a boiler-room operator in 1972; Lou Anderson (a

LABOR: What's a Job Worth?

Why should the garbage man make more than the schoolteacher? Labor experts are responding to such questions with an effort to establish standards of "comparable worth" among various occupations.

Marilyn Shahan is a nurse, employed by the city of Denver. In 1976, she and eight other nurses sued the city, alleging that nurses were underpaid compared with other, male city workers. "Beginning tree-trimmers get more than a beginning nurse," Shahan claims, "and right across the board, women are worse-paid than men."

This sounds like any other run-of-the-mill sex discrimination complaint, but it isn't. Shahan and her co-plaintiffs did not claim that Denver paid male nurses more than female nurses or that it discouraged women nurses from moving into other, better-paid jobs. "This is something we didn't go

into, though discouragement is certainly there," admits the plaintiffs' attorney, Craig Barnes. "The director of nursing services, for example, said she didn't want to transfer out; she wanted to stay in nursing, but be paid what she was worth." Hardly an outrageous desire, but one that the anti-discrimination laws don't recognize. The Denver nurses were claiming discrimination not against themselves as women, or as people, but against an occupation.

U. S. District Court Judge Fred Winner held that the law takes note of acts of discrimination only against people, not against jobs. Judge Winner's opinion was upheld on appeal, but the issues raised in Denver are not likely to go away, for the plaintiffs were arguing a concept that, while novel, is beginning to attract the interest of scores of feminist attorneys, of public interest groups, and of the government itself. "We were trying to introduce the concept of job worth," Shahan explains.

The idea that all jobs have some inherent worth or value, and that

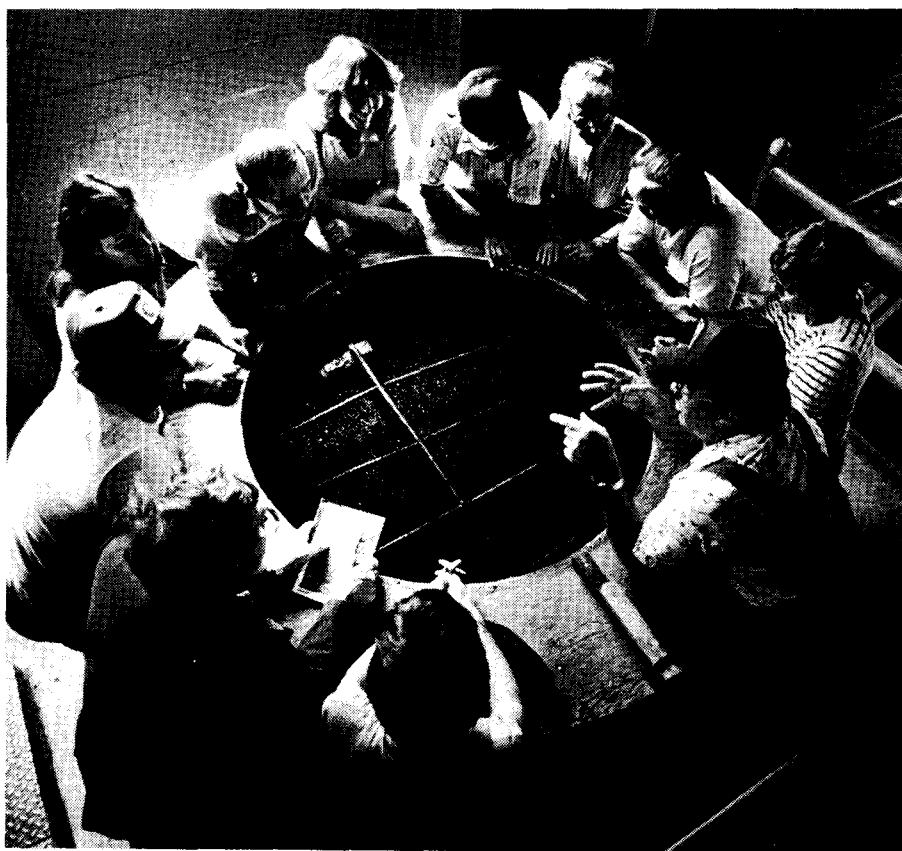
woman) was hired as a library assistant in 1970. Again, both were assigned to the same labor grade. But, despite Anderson's seniority, between 1972 and 1980 Lang earned \$6070 more than Anderson did.

The university's defense was that shortages of maintenance workers in the local labor market forced salaries up in these jobs. However, District Court Judge J. McManus ruled against the plaintiffs on legal, technical grounds. His decision (though it was recently overruled by an appellate court) formed the basis of Judge Winner's decision against the plaintiffs in Denver.

While comparable-worth advocates haven't had much success in the courts so far, support for the concept is growing. The AFL-CIO decided at its 1979 convention to back job-worth efforts. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in the U.S. Department of Labor (which is responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination regulations that apply to federal contractors) has also declared itself in favor of comparable worth. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has commissioned a full-scale, \$200,000 study of procedures for comparing the "worth" of jobs, to be undertaken by the National Academy of Sciences. The EEOC also held public hearings on the issue last spring; the witnesses (selected by the EEOC) turned out to be overwhelmingly in favor of comparable worth.

If comparable-worth advocates succeed in convincing the courts or government agencies by their arguments, they will then have to show how businesses can apply job-worth concepts to their labor-grade and salary structures. If employers are no longer allowed to set wages according to prevailing labor-market rates, how are they to measure the worth of every job in their companies relative to every other job?

Comparable-worth advocates say this can be done using what is called a "point-evaluation" system, which analyzes jobs in terms of required skills, effort, and responsibility. Such analyses can become amazingly complex. One study of evaluation techniques sponsored by the German government concluded that the number of finger movements per second is a vital indicator of secretarial job worth: a ninety-word-per-minute typist should be awarded points for 7.5 individual finger move-



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ments per second (or 2250 separate finger movements sustained for five minutes).

The approach of American job-evaluation practitioners seems hardly more sophisticated than that of their methodical German colleagues. A leader in the American job-evaluation field is the firm of Norman D. Willis and Associates of Seattle, who prepared a comparable-worth study for the State of Washington. For this analysis, Willis consultants worked with state personnel and labor officials to assign points to jobs based on knowledge and skills, mental demands, accountability, and working conditions.

For example, the job of Registered Nurse at Level IV (the highest labor grade in the analysis) scored 280 points for knowledge and skills, 122 for mental demands, 160 for accountability, and 11 for working conditions, making a total of 573 points—the highest score in the study. The job of Computer Systems Analyst, also Level IV, scored only 426 points (212 for knowledge and skills, 92 for mental demands, 122 for account-

ability, and zero for working conditions). Nurse I scored 289 points (160, 53, 61, and 15)—considerably more than the job of Research Editor, also Level I, which scored only 233 points, and far more than the fairly high-level Secretary III job, with its total of 197 points. Engineering Technician, Data Control Technician, and Laundry Worker all scored much the same—112 to 117 points—while the job of Truck Driver I scored a low 97 points (mental demands on truckers were assessed at 10 points).

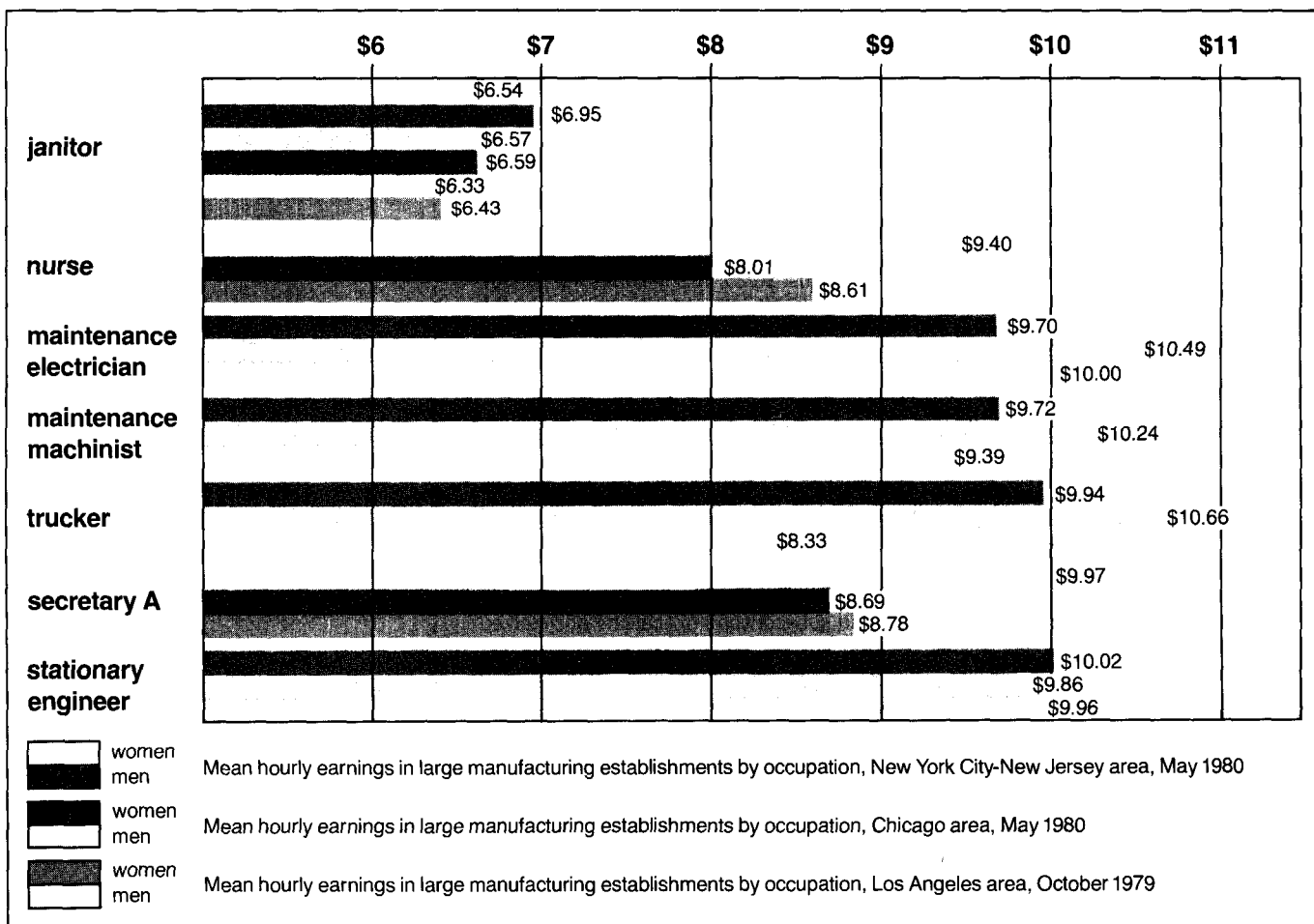
No one would deny that nursing is a demanding profession requiring highly skilled and responsible practitioners. Moreover, most liberal-minded people seem to agree with the Willis assessment of nursing as higher than trucking, if only on the basis of a feeling that the job of nursing is somehow "worth more" than the job of trucking. The market, however, disagrees, for nurses typically earn far less than truckers.

The accompanying chart shows the mean hourly earnings in large manufacturing establishments of workers in two female-dominated occupations (nursing and secretarial work), four male-dominated occupations (main-

tance machinist, maintenance electrician, stationary engineer, and trucker), and one occupation (janitor) in which there are enough males and females to enable the Bureau of Labor Statistics to gather wage data for each sex. If one compares nursing with each male-dominated job, nurses may appear to be underpaid just because they are women: despite the skills and effort inherent in their work, nurses in two out of the three cities shown in these charts earn less than everyone else except janitors.

Unfortunately for the comparable-worth hypothesis, however, a look at secretarial wages undermines the theory that sex discrimination is the sole or major cause of pay discrepancies between different kinds of jobs. In all three cities, female secretaries earn more than nurses. Secretaries also earn more than male truckers in the Los Angeles area, and more than male electricians, machinists, and truckers in the greater New York area.

Could forces other than sex discrimination be at work here? If sex discrimination is the sole or major factor behind wage differences, then, clearly, truckers in the Los Angeles and greater



New York areas have a sex-discrimination claim at least as convincing as that of nurses: they are mostly male, and they are paid considerably less than secretaries, who are mostly female; and, finger movements per second notwithstanding, truckers would probably not have too hard a time finding experts willing to testify to the substantial skills and responsibilities involved in driving a truck.

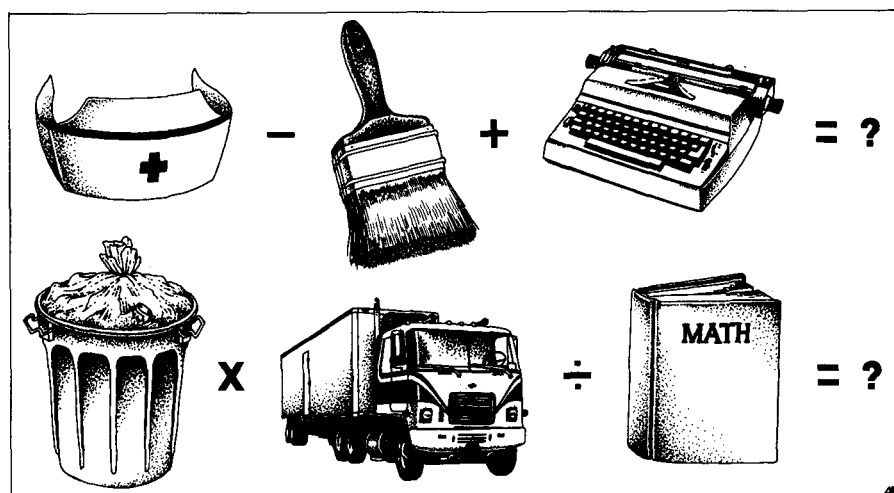
Any such claim might seem absurd, but it is no more absurd than the claim that nurses' low wages are due to sex discrimination. Either claim ignores both the meaning of discrimination, as defined by the Civil Rights and Equal Pay acts, and the existence of other, economic reasons for pay disparities between men and women.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act says that an employer may not "fail or refuse to hire, or . . . discharge any individual, or otherwise . . . discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment" because of that individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This clause has been interpreted by the courts as banning two basic types of job discrimination: paying men more than women for substantially the *same* job (an employment practice that is also outlawed by the Equal Pay Act), and favoring men over equally qualified women in determining access or promotions to *better* jobs. Thus, if an employer prevented women nurses with the requisite credentials for better-paying jobs from entering those jobs, then the employer would be violating Title VII. But the courts have never ruled that either Title VII or the Equal Pay Act prohibits employers from paying workers in one kind of job—such as nursing—less than workers in a different kind of job—such as tree-trimming—even if the former are all women and even if their job is alleged to be "comparable" to the better-paid male job.

Comparable worth, then, is a novel concept for the courts. It has nothing to do with the idea of equal pay for equal work, and even less to do with the idea of equal opportunity—the two basic notions underlying present anti-discrimination laws. Moreover, no one has made a convincing case that reinterpreting or expanding job-bias statutes to cover comparable-worth claims would represent good social policy.

In a conventional discrimination

case, the plaintiffs are alleging a discriminatory wage structure within given jobs or illegal denial of equal access to better jobs; they are also saying, and can often prove, that the employer is to blame and is capable of making restitu-



tion. In comparable-worth complaints, pay disparities related to sex are less apparent or provable, and where they do exist, the employer is not always clearly responsible for them. Some jobs pay low wages for reasons that have nothing to do with employer discrimination, and some women—like some men—may actually prefer such jobs. For example, they may prefer to work a day shift rather than a better-paid night shift. Marilyn Shahan, in fact, finds the better-paid tree-trimmer job quite undesirable. "I wouldn't work purely for money," she says, "not outside of nursing. That's what I like to do."

If generations of little girls have been encouraged by their parents to prefer nursing to tree-trimming, resulting in an oversupply of nurses relative to tree-trimmers (or doctors or secretaries), the result may well be an unfortunate economic situation for those who grow up to be nurses. But that doesn't mean nurses' employers are responsible for the situation, or that they should be forced to remedy the unfortunate results of the nurses' own choice of profession.

However, no one could rationally argue that women systematically prefer low-paying jobs, and the wide gap between men's and women's average pay is undeniable. According to statistics issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1964 and 1979 the median employment (wage and salary) income of full-time, year-round white women workers fell very slightly relative to white male workers' employment in-

come: from 59.4 percent to 59.1 percent. More striking, however, was that by 1971—seven years after passage of Title VII—white women were still earning less than white men earned in 1964; seven years later, in 1978, white women

earned less than white men earned in 1971.

The raw numbers are certainly not encouraging, and this seeming loss for white women is frequently cited both as evidence of a real decline in the relative work status of *all* women in recent years and as an indication that more radical efforts to eradicate sex differences in pay are called for.

However, the situation is far less depressing than comparable-worth advocates fear. Between 1964 and 1978, nonwhite women's employment income rose from 41.2 percent to 55.6 percent of the figure for white males (and from 62.4 to 69.8 percent of the figure for nonwhite males). Also, while no national data permit analyses of trends in pay between men and women with similar education, work experience, length of job tenure, and hours of work, any apparent drop in white women's average earnings relative to white men's is due, in all likelihood, not to increased discrimination but to other factors.

Dr. June O'Neil, director of the Urban Institute's Program on Women and the Family, points out that "in the fifties, women workers were more highly educated than male workers; the few women who worked at all tended to be career women who were highly educated. As more and more women have entered the labor market, the *average* educational level of women has not risen as fast as that of men." For example, O'Neil says, in 1952, the average working woman had 12 years of education, compared with 10.6 for the average working male. By 1964, women workers

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still averaged only 12.3 years of education—owing in part to a substantial influx of less-educated women into the job market—while the figure for men had risen to 12.2. Also, at any given moment women have fewer years of job tenure, on average, than do men, and still don't average as many hours of work per week as men.

"If you could control for all these factors," concludes O'Neil, "you'd probably find that women's wages haven't dropped at all compared to men's." She has collected data adjusted for age and education that show that the salary gap between men and women *with similar skills* actually narrowed between 1967 and 1977, at least for younger women. "I think women's work status has improved, not declined," O'Neil concludes.

Nonetheless, women still, on average, earn far less than men, and a major reason is occupational segregation. "Just open your eyes in any business you walk into," says Barbara Bergmann, economics professor at the University of Maryland. "In a restaurant, you'll be waited on by females; if you get your car repaired, all the mechanics are likely to be men; if you look into a company's executive offices, the executives are men. Women are restricted to a relatively few fields, so that there are a lot of women candidates for jobs in these fields. This brings down their wages. So does the fact that the fields they are restricted to are usually not the most productive or well-rewarded."

Restricting women to a few low-paid jobs and preventing them from entering other, better-paid occupations not only violates Title VII, but also creates an oversupply of labor in the less-desirable jobs, thus forcing down wages there. The classic remedy for such an artificial oversupply of labor in traditionally female jobs is simply to make employers open up higher-paid jobs to women, as the Civil Rights Act and much of the litigation of the past fifteen years have attempted to do. When many women, not just an exceptional few, leave their low-paid job ghettos for greener pastures elsewhere, women's wages will rise not only on average but also in the erstwhile ghettos, simply because fewer people will be seeking work there. However, as comparable-worth advocates stress, this can't hap-

pen—and hasn't happened—overnight. Whatever the gains of the past fifteen years, and they have been considerable, women still earn substantially less than men, and still tend to remain in the lower-paying, traditionally female occupations.

The basic argument, then, is about appropriate remedies. One may sympathize with Marilyn Shahan, who wants to remain a nurse, who believes she is doing considerable good, and who would dearly like to be paid as much as a tree-trimmer. On the other hand, institutionalizing comparable-worth theories will only aggravate the problem of occupational segregation, by encouraging women who are qualified for better jobs to enter or remain in traditionally female jobs, and by deflecting attention from efforts to open up male-dominated jobs. Worse yet, requiring employers to raise wages in female-dominated jobs to the level prevailing in "comparable" male-dominated jobs is likely to produce layoffs in the female job sector without increasing openings for women in "male" jobs.

The Urban Institute's Dr. O'Neil sums up the doubts felt by many job-rights advocates: "Fussing around with wages is not the way to go," she believes. "It's giving very bad signals to women who are choosing careers. The government should be trying to break down barriers against women in fields like engineering, not looking for ways to get pay increased in fields like library work."

If, as seems highly probable, the Reagan administration does not give its support to comparable worth, the struggle to gain acceptance for the concept will become far more arduous and protracted. In view of this, it seems especially ill-advised for job-rights advocates to throw their slender resources into a fight for a concept that is more likely to hinder than to help working women, and that will only further alienate political support for the anti-discrimination policies women still greatly need.

—VIVIENNE KILLINGSWORTH

REPORTS & COMMENT CONTRIBUTORS

John Stone is a free-lance writer who has traveled widely in Europe and Asia.

Vivienne Killingsworth is a free-lance writer with a special interest in public policy issues.

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THE KGB AND RELIGION

SIR: I am writing to temper what I feel may well be a misleading impression produced by part of "Escape From Boredom: A Defector's Story" by Nora Beloff (November *Atlantic*). Of the influence of the KGB upon the activities of the Arbatov Institute, Beloff says: "It has a special section looking after foreign visitors. (Among other things, it organizes visits to the famous Zagorsk Monastery, to which the KGB rigorously controls access. Visits there are designed to persuade Americans that the Soviet Union respects religion.)"

I have more than once visited the Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery in Zagorsk. These visits were arranged, as all normal tour arrangements for foreigners are handled in the Soviet Union, through Intourist. On my visits, the monastery was simply swarming with people: foreign tourists, Soviet tourists interested in the complex of buildings as an architectural monument, and religious pilgrims. (As a goal for religious pilgrimage, the Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery in pre-Soviet times was second only to the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. It still functions in that capacity, though on a much reduced scale.) The seminary for training clergy for the Russian Orthodox Church is located within the complex, as are at least two "working" churches. The Soviet State may not "respect" religion, but the Russian Orthodox Church is at least tolerated and permitted to ensure its continuity by the training of clergy, for which there seems to be no lack of candidates.

I do not doubt the capacity of the KGB to "rigorously control" access to any location in the Soviet Union that it chooses to single out for such attention, but it is difficult to believe that the situation at Zagorsk fits such a description. The Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery in Zagorsk is as accessible as the

Kremlin in Moscow or any other public place in the Soviet Union.

THELWALL PROCTOR
Arcata, Calif.

Nora Beloff replies:

The information on Zagorsk was provided by Galina Orionova, a staff member of the Arbatov Institute, who was often given the task of arranging foreign visits there, designed to demonstrate Soviet respect for religious freedom. She comments: "Dr. Proctor reminds me of someone who has just dropped in on a family which he does not know and presumes to pass judgment on the relations between wife and husband or between them and their children." Referring to his view that "the Russian Orthodox Church is at least tolerated and permitted," Miss Orionova and I suggest the professor might examine the files on persecution available at Keston College, Kent, the British center of the study of religions in communist countries.

SIR: Nora Beloff writes of Galina Orionova that "She trotted out the appropriate Party line [about the Peace Corps]: young people were sent out as agents of the CIA for the purpose of subversion and propaganda. (Privately she knew the idea was to channel the energies and enthusiasms of young Americans into relief work in the developing world—but it would have been folly to say so.)" Why? It is certainly no more the truth than the Party line.

"She is utterly contemptuous of people taken in by Soviet propaganda," writes Ms. Beloff. But not, it seems, of people taken in by other propaganda.

KATHRYN WOODWARD
Winlaw, British Columbia

WORLD'S WORST POET?

SIR: All very well for Steele Commager to sink his harpoon into the corpus of

the "world's worst poet" ("Words Upon the Greatness of William McGonagall," December *Atlantic*). Let me suggest, though, that those in any business, profession, or art (perhaps poets especially) who set what might be called a base standard are of value to mankind.

These hapless goons serve us all, not only by chiseling basal benchmarks for specialists and scholars, but for a reason expressed in an anecdote about the seventeenth-century English poet George Wither, who is said to have taken the Parliamentary side and been eventually captured by the Royalists. Wither's friend (?) and fellow poet John Denham, himself a Royalist, supposedly then directed an appeal to King Charles not to hang Wither, "because that so long as Wither lived, Denham would not be accounted the worst poet in England."

As long as someone else is incontrovertibly worst, all the rest of us are comparably, if not incomparably, *better*.

EMERSON STONE
Greenwich, Conn.

SIR: Steele Commager's splendid piece about William McGonagall reminds me of some lines published a few years before McGonagall began versifying:

*Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.*

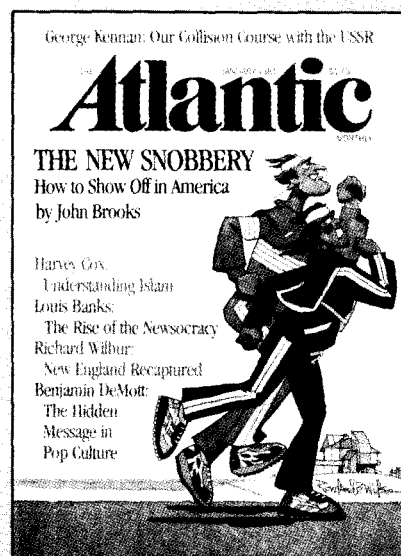
It is difficult to imagine such egregious rubbish being received with anything but derision, yet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was never pelted with vegetables or booed off a platform.

JAMES FANNING
New Canaan, Conn.

LOVING TEACHING

SIR: I would like to reply to Richard Hawley's sententious article "Mr. Chips Redux" (November *Atlantic*). I agree that "love of learners . . . [is needed] to

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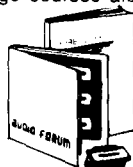
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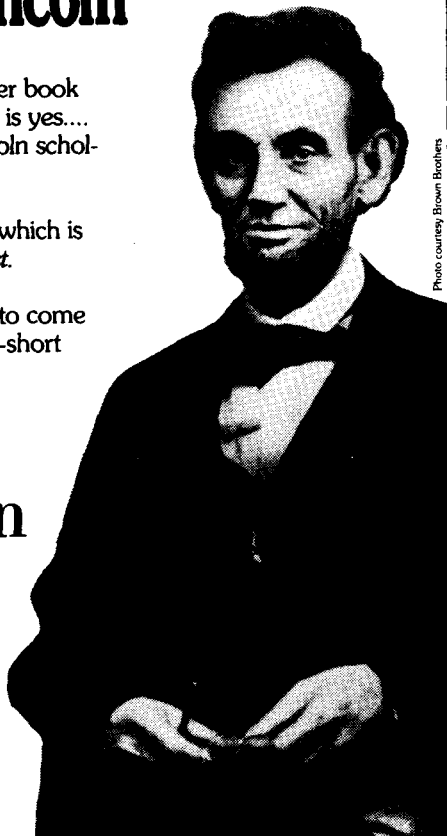


Photo courtesy Brown Brothers

encourage a love of learning." But, at least in America, it is sentimental to tout love as any sort of nostrum.

While love may govern the relationship of a teacher to his students, it does not govern the relationship of the institution to its inmates. If love were a matter of policy, then we would simply not have the kind of system we have. In any assessment of teaching today, we have to take a critical look at how the system structures the time and subject matter it controls. The system is structured to encourage rote memory, fragmented perceptions, and passivity. It is not interested in creating that informed citizenry that Jefferson hoped for, nor does it care to create the sorts of situations that allow a teacher to know a student well enough to judge and counsel him. No doubt the school system will survive in its present form for many years; most institutions survive at the expense of the people they serve. But any humane and caring person should question whether a democracy can seriously educate everyone and still make sure some people get the sort of elitist education that ensures quality. The principle of universal education is fine; the practice is a disaster.

What often passes for loving teaching is simply a teacher who cares enough about his students to save them from the stupefaction of the system. If a teacher burns out, I think we need to look at what the teacher fights to give his students some dignity and self-esteem.

MICHAEL BETTENCOURT
Ithaca, N.Y.

Richard A. Hawley replies:

Mr. Bettencourt doubts that "a democracy can seriously educate everyone and still make sure some people get the sort of elitist education that ensures quality." Who knows? I suppose the outcome depends on who wants either of those things and how much.

My point is that love of learners is, finally, the teacher's only sustaining motive for giving away his own learning, through a lifetime's work, to others. The other motives—egotism, self-promotion, ease, money—come to relatively little in schools. Schools are founded, built, directed, and staffed by persons who are motivated either by the real thing or by something else. Only in the latter case do students become "inmates" of "institutions" that "encourage rote memory, fragmented perception, and passivity."

Without love, the system—any system—looks profoundly grim.

NAMES OF CHRISTMAS

SIR: For someone concerned about details of language, John Ciardi should be ashamed of the misinformation in his article on Christmas (December *Atlantic*). Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum is simply the Latin of the Greek phrase recorded in John 19.19 as the inscription placed on the cross (in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek) at Pilate's order. IHS is not the first three but the first two and the last letters of the Greek IHCOYC, written in the form contracted by omission which was so widely used in ancient Greek manuscripts (IHC), just as XC is Christos. Iesus Hominum (not Hominem!) Salvator is probably more a play on words (also popular in the early Church) than a "misunderstanding," and, in any case, the Church had other expansions as well. All this is accurately recorded in the *OED*. Incidentally, Myra is in Lycia, not Lydia.

ROGER S. BAGNALL
New York, N.Y.

John Ciardi replies:

Lydia for *Lycia* is a mistake of my ignorance. *Hominem* for *Hominum* is a simple typo. Both my much ignored (alas) Greek textbook and *Webster's New World Dictionary* authorize IHS as I rendered it. Professor Bagnall's insistence on a permissible variant as the only possible rendering, like his tone, is a touch on the intemperate side of courteous exchange.

CONRAD REVISITED

SIR: In "The New Journalism Revisited" (December *Atlantic*), Deborah McGill makes the quite common error of calling Conrad's Charlie Marlow "Marlowe." Another mistake of perhaps equally small consequence—the cruising yawl in *Heart of Darkness* (not *The Heart of Darkness*) is not *crossing* the English Channel but, throughout the entire novel, *anchored* in the lower estuary of the Thames. Finally, and most important, Kurtz is regarded by Marlow (or Conrad) not as merely a "burnt-out entrepreneur" but as a man of great potential gifts destroyed by being utterly cut off from the external restraints of law and public opinion, a tragic figure who must face alone the utter silence and utter solitude of the powers of darkness symbolized by the

jungle of the Upper Congo. Internal restraint, Conrad is trying to tell us, is for most of us guilty creatures an inadequate defense against pure evil.

ROBERT W. WHEELER
Glendale, Ariz.

Deborah McGill replies:

I agree that Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* was not merely a burnt-out entrepreneur but he was at least that, and to have said more would have turned an allusion into a digression. On the other three counts, I blush.

ADVICE & CONSENT

SIR: Your correspondent Edith Nitch-Smith states in the October issue that in twenty years' residence in Britain she never heard a carpenter called a chippy.

As a native of mature age with a working life spent in the building trade, I have never heard a carpenter called anything else.

G. E. FRENCH
Maidstone, Kent, England

SIR: By mischance, I did not see proof of my article "New England Recaptured" (January *Atlantic*), and so could not do anything about some unfortunate editorial changes that had been made in it. Nothing is less exciting to read than a list of corrigenda, and so I shall not offer one; but I should like to correct one bit of apparent madness in the first paragraph. There, the editorial deletion of a half-sentence has me saying that much of western Massachusetts "looks as it did eighty or ninety years ago. It is a horse-drawn, unpaved, and largely unmechanized world that one sees, and the décor and clothing are dead giveaways."

Need I say that what one sees, in that second sentence, is not present-day western Massachusetts but the respects in which the Howes brothers' photographs do *not* resemble the present? Let me assure Boston and Cambridge people that we westerners are blessed with cars and tractors, and that our clothes are no more revealing than theirs.

RICHARD WILBUR
Cummington, Mass.

SIR: The letter from Thomas A. Separo of the Dow Chemical Company that appeared in the December *Atlantic* and protested Caskie Stinnett's casual use of Dow's registered trademark Styro-

foam reminded me of a similar transgression by Dow.

About two years ago the company advertised an offer of a silver dollar to users of Dow products who submitted proof of the purchase of specified products. The term "silver" was prominently displayed, and it might be assumed that a chemical company would be aware of the significant differences between silver and baser metals. A friend who responded to the offer received a current copper and nickel dollar.

A letter to the president of Dow bringing the substitution to his attention brought a reply stating that "silver dollar" was a common term for a dollar coin, and their use of the word "silver" in the advertisement should not have been taken literally.

HENRY HENLY
West St. Paul, Minn.

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BACK TO THE GOLD STANDARD?

by James K. Glassman

True believers in the intrinsic worth of gold feel that the precious metal may soon be restored to its historic role as the basis for all currency, that doomsday draws near for printing-press dollars. Oddly enough, a return to the gold standard would cost the gold bugs a lot of money.

On the Thursday morning after Ronald Reagan was elected President, 4578 men and women were shifting about uncomfortably in their seats in a New Orleans convention hall. Each of them had paid \$395 to hear dozens of speakers, eminent and crackpot, extol the virtues of gold—something that most of the 4578 men and women had owned for a long time and believed in as a religious icon rather than as a mere investment. But they were uncomfortable. They were happy Reagan had won. Reagan, after all, had promised to do the things that had to be done: balance the budget, re-arm, cut regulations, cut taxes. The Republican party platform even decreed “the severing of the dollar’s links with real commodities” and advocated “the restoration of a dependable monetary standard.” These phrases, the audience knew, were code for remonetizing gold—bringing back the gold standard—which is the goal of the National Committee for Monetary Reform (NCMR), the organization that

was sponsoring this seventh annual New Orleans conference. On the other hand, if Reagan were to accomplish all he set out to do, those 4578 people stood to lose a lot of money. The success of gold depends on the failure of the dollar, and how could the dollar fail with Reagan at the helm?

Sleek, tanned, silver-haired, and wearing wonderful dark glasses, Nicholas Deak looked like Aristotle Onassis resurrected. He stood at the podium of the convention hall, the Rivergate, and a gigantic TV screen behind him magnified his image. He is the founder of Deak-Perera, the world’s largest currency-exchange firm, and a strong believer in gold, silver, and “hard money,” a term applied to the currency of countries that balance their budgets—in other words, Switzerland. Dr. Deak was telling the crowd what causes inflation: “Not the oil, not the unions, not the nasty bankers, but deficit spending.” He got political: “I don’t see why the recipient of welfare should have the right to vote.” (Applause) “He will only vote for more welfare.” (Applause) A messenger hustled onto the stage and handed Dr. Deak a slip of paper. “I just got the latest figures,” Deak announced. “Gold is \$631 an ounce.” No applause this time, but certainly a wave of relief. The election of Ronald Reagan had not sent gold plummeting; it was up three dollars.

A theme soon emerged at the conference. Reagan had good intentions, but he really couldn’t change anything. “There’s a huge boulder at the top of the mountain, and it’s careening down the slope,” said James U.

Blanchard, the thirty-seven-year-old founder of the National Committee for Monetary Reform. What could Reagan or anyone else do to stop it? "No President, not even a Republican with a Republican Senate and more Republicans in the House, will be able to turn the tide. We've got too many years of economic sin to pay for." ("Sin," indeed! And we'll have to pray to gold for salvation.)

It was a close call, but on Sunday the 4578 men and women left New Orleans convinced that, Reagan or not, the republic was doomed. Their investments were safe.

"Constipated." That's how a friend of mine in New York describes gold bugs. Many of them are small entrepreneurs, doctors, or lawyers who have made their piles and are now retired or semi-retired and spending most of their time figuring out how to hold on to their wealth. The typical gold bug (no longer a term of opprobrium, but one the bugs themselves like to use) is a trim sixty-two-year-old who owns a thriving corrugated box factory in upstate New York and spends six months of the year in Arizona or Florida. Financial newsletter writers such as James Dines and Harry Browne persuaded him to buy gold in 1973 when it was \$65 an ounce. He has bullion buried in the back yard; Krugerrands in the safe deposit box at the bank; shares of South African mining stocks in concerns such as East Driefontein, Blyvoor, and ASA Limited at his broker's; and perhaps a little silver in the vault at home. He has made a fortune with all of it, and he'll listen to Dines and Browne forever.

Browne, one of the star speakers at the conference, flew in from Zurich and lounged tieless at the podium when his turn came. He told everyone to keep holding gold, even though it was headed to \$300 or \$400 an ounce by the end of 1981. Then it would rise, "maybe to \$3000 within three or four years." He paused, then added, "But I don't know, and if you just wrote that down, you should erase it."

Dines, who describes himself as "a visionary" and "the original gold bug," doesn't equivocate. He tells his followers that he is "rampantly optimistic and unrestrainedly bullish on gold and silver mining shares" (he prefers the stocks over the physical stuff). Keep buying, he says, until he issues "our much-vaunted-all-out-one-and-only-gold-and-silver-sell-signal," the acronym for which is MVAOOAOGASSS. He pronounces the word with much hissing and relish.

James K. Glassman is executive editor of *The Washingtonian*.

So the gold bugs will hold on to their fortunes. But they aren't particularly happy about all the money they have made. They're worried that the government will take it away from them, or that the mobs will steal it. Hence the constipation. Gold bugs are not alone in these attitudes. Holding on to what you have, getting yours and pulling the ladder up behind you, is a characteristic shared these days by many middle-class Americans, including, ironically, the generation of sixties radicals, whose current passion is real estate.

The gold bugs will hold on to their fortunes. But they're worried that the government will take it away from them, or that the mobs will steal it.

Gold bugs may not be whimsical fellows, but on Friday at the conference each received a pink sheet of paper with "The First Hard Money Crossword Puzzle" printed on it. It was composed by Mark Skousen, a former economic analyst for the CIA who now edits a Washington newsletter called *Forecasts & Strategies* (the November issue echoed the theme of the conference: "No matter who is president, or who is in Congress, taxes and inflation are bound to weave an evil mixture of burdens . . ."). Neophytes can get a good idea of what gold bugs believe from the clues:

1 Down: Deregulation of this would ease the energy crunch (OIL)

15 Across: Legal theft (TAX)

2 Down: Caused by expansion of the money supply (INFLATION)

33 Across: The ultimate hard money (GOLD)

Follow their logic: Inflation is caused by too much money chasing too few goods. The reason there is too much money is that the Federal Reserve Board has been expanding credit (and hence the money supply) in order to finance the federal budget, which has been in deficit for fourteen of the past fifteen years. Why is the budget in deficit? Too much welfare, too many social programs, too many bureaucrats running rampant. And then there's the too-few-goods side of the coin, the supply side: The private sector isn't producing because it is discouraged by confiscatory taxes and government regulations.

The best way to understand inflation is backward: It's not that the value, or price, of objects is going up, but that the value of the dollars used to buy those objects is going down. An investor tries to stay even with inflation by getting rid of dollars as fast as he can

(the longer he keeps them, the less they're worth) and replacing them with objects.

This is where gold comes in. As an object, it has retained its value in the face of inflation. In fact, it has done far better than that. In the past ten years, the price of gold in dollars has increased nearly 2000 percent, while the price of the average object (Consumer Price Index) has increased about 100 percent. Why? Because gold has become recognized by more and more people as an investment, and the price of an investment reflects not only its value in the present but its likely value in the future. While other objects, such as paintings or houses, may become cheaper in the future, gold—immutable, scarce, beautiful—will not. Unless it's already overpriced. But gold bugs don't believe it is.

Gold has other attractive characteristics. It's easy to carry, easy to hide. The Internal Revenue Service has a difficult time taxing the profits made in gold speculation because sales of gold are not always recorded, the way sales of stocks and bonds and real estate are. And gold feels good (better than a stock certificate, anyway); it's permanent and shiny. The delegates to the NCMR conference wore lots of it: big Rolex watches on wrists, chains draped around necks and on hairy chests.

Gold is more than an investment and an ornament. It is a cause, a talisman; it is something stable in a world gone crazy.

It was only natural that I wanted to talk about gold, but all my friends in New Orleans wanted to talk about murder. A young mother of two had been strangled and stabbed to death in her kitchen in a part of town where that sort of thing is not supposed to happen. And now old friends in this city where I had lived for seven years were telling me about it over shrimp remoulade and lake trout at Galatoire's. Fear, chaos, a sense that things were out of control—that's what was served with the seafood. We emerged in the November sunshine two hours later, after Myers rum and soda and cups of chickory coffee. They went back to the bank and the law office. I headed down Canal Street to the Rivergate to listen to speakers tell me about fear, chaos, and a sense that things were out of control. And about what I should do: buy gold.

In the back of the convention hall were more than two hundred booths where people were hawking gold coins, stamps, investment art, partnerships in soybean farms, freeze-dried food, antique guns, shares in swift horses, and safes you can hide behind wall plugs. At one booth stood a smiling, middle-aged man named Fred Muller and his smiling wife. Mr. Muller was selling a book he wrote, which has a gruesome red

cover with a black cloud on it and a hand (more like a claw) reaching down from the cloud. The book is entitled *America's Coming Nightmare Inflation, Economic Collapse, and Crime Revolution*. The promotional literature went like this:

When 20-30-40% Inflation Strikes . . .

*Will *food riots* occur? Will *cities burn*? Are rural properties *safe*? Is your home *safe*?

*Will Social Security *fail*? Will pensions *stop*? Will corporate retirement *fail*? . . .

*Is *gold* a haven? . . . Is your *home* a haven?

*Can the government control *crime*? Must *you* control it? . . .

*Is the Army *helpless*? . . . Are Police *inadequate*?

Not all gold bugs see doomsday as vividly as Fred Muller, but almost all of them have a feeling that it's fast approaching. It threatens their piles. It threatens their lives. In fact, the third favorite word at the NCMR conference (after "gold" and "silver") was "survival." At a booth near Fred Muller's, a company called Survive America was passing out a slick brochure with a worried family on the cover and the headline "When Push Comes to Shove, Will You Survive?" Inside, it said: "It happens unexpectedly. At any time, in any place. Suddenly, without warning, danger threatens. Your very life—and the lives of those you love—hang in the balance. Your next move may determine who will survive." The idea is that in order to survive "senseless crime, civil strife, strikes, the technology of modern nuclear warfare," you'll have to take a three-day Survival Weekend in a remote section of Arizona, where Survive America employees such as Fred Scantling ("9 years experience in search and rescue as a pararescue technician. Three years in S.E. Asia. Expert marksman.") will teach you skills including compass reading, selecting the right firearm, finding water, building shelters, and preparing food in the wild.

What does gold have to do with survival? Gold bugs tell you that when the currency collapses, people will always accept gold in payment for such necessary items as food. This seems to me a dubious proposition, but the truth is that I own a twenty-dollar gold piece (now worth about forty times as many dollars as when it was issued). Just in case. And, leaving the Rivergate on Friday, I decided to call on an old friend, a shrewd young businessman. I went up to his office, chatted about murder, dirty streets, and good oysters, then mentioned gold. "Got any?" I asked. He reached into his bottom drawer and tossed a bar, weighing a kilo, on the desk; then another and another and another and another. Five kilos—eleven pounds—176 ounces of gold. More than \$100,000 worth at current prices. "Just in case," he said.

But gold is more than a means of survival; it *is* survival. Gold has lasted as a medium of exchange for more than 2000 years. It doesn't decay. It will be around long after General Motors goes under. To many true believers, gold has become God. Religious connotations were heard continually at the conference: Blanchard's "sin," Skousen's "evil." Nelson Bunker Hunt, a great hero of the gold bugs, who see him as the object of government persecution, told the audience, in a speech that was supposed to be about economics: "I believe that the United States is suffering from a spiritual crisis that only turning to God and Jesus Christ can solve." Even Lewis E. Lehrman, the most scholarly and sophisticated of the speakers at the conference—a graduate of Yale and Harvard, a Carnegie and Woodrow Wilson Fellow—couldn't resist a religious allusion. He talked about gold being the only commodity with sufficient properties to serve as a monetary standard. "It might stretch credulity," he said, "to believe that gold has these properties by providential design."

Did God put gold here on purpose, to serve as man's salvation, his only means of survival? The men in the Rolex watches won't say yes bluntly. They are too close to gold to articulate their feelings about it. But certainly many of them believe it: God is gold; gold is God.

Lewis Lehrman spoke on the first day of the conference, right after Deak and Blanchard, and my notes on him begin, "What a jaw!" Physically striking, thin and tough at forty-two, Lehrman is a New York scholar turned businessman turned scholar. After his Ivy League days, he became president of the Rite Aid Corporation, building it into one of the most successful drugstore chains in the country. He has stepped down as president, but remains chairman of the executive committee. Yet most of his time is spent investing (guarding his pile) and running the Lehrman Institute, a foundation that sponsors economic and social research. Its board includes such conservative academics as Irving Kristol, Henry R. Luce Professor of Urban Values at New York University, and Robert W. Tucker, professor of political science at Johns Hopkins. One of the institute's projects is the translation (in four volumes) of the complete works of Jacques Rueff, finance minister of France under De Gaulle and a major influence on Lehrman.

In January 1980, Morgan Stanley, the New York investment banking firm, published a meticulous forty-four-page paper by Lehrman entitled "Monetary Policy, the Federal Reserve System, and Gold." It makes a solid intellectual case for the gold standard, a system that has been derided by Keynesians, monetar-

ists, corporate-statists, and socialists (Lenin said gold would one day be used to floor latrines). "The gold standard is still unfashionable," Lehrman told the multitudes at the Rivergate. And he was putting it mildly.

But remonetization is slowly gaining a following, much as the Laffer Curve argument for a tax cut has slowly gained one. In fact, the month after Morgan Stanley published Lehrman's paper on gold, Arthur B. Laffer published one of his own, called "Reinstate-

Gold is more than an investment and an ornament. It is a cause, a talisman; it is something stable in a world gone crazy.

ment of the Dollar: The Blueprint." Laffer, the University of Southern California economics professor who believes that low tax rates can bring in as much revenue as high tax rates, spelled out in detail how remonetization would work, and his paper became the basis for a bill introduced in the Senate last September by Jesse Helms of North Carolina. The Helms bill is the monetary equivalent of the Kemp-Roth tax bill. Helms's economic counsel, Howard Segermark, moonlights as head of the Institute on Money and Inflation, a gold-standard lobbying organization backed by NCMR.

A few weeks after the New Orleans conference, I tracked down Lewis Lehrman in his office on the twenty-fifth floor of a building at Lexington Avenue and 54th Street. At the time, Lehrman was considered a candidate for high office in the Reagan administration, perhaps even secretary of the treasury. But Lehrman himself had his doubts: "The problem with me is that I'll actually do all the things that Reagan talked about during the campaign.

"First of all, the gold standard has little to do with gold as a commodity. The gold standard is a political and social institution. It's a special means to achieve a particular end: a reasonably stable price level. We all have this same goal—price stability. The argument is no longer over the goal but over the means."

It is true that the political question Which is worse, inflation or unemployment? has been answered in America. Inflation is clearly the leading villain, to both the left and the right. Controlling inflation—keeping prices stable—is the primary goal of public policy. There are first steps: increasing investment (supply) by cutting taxes and reducing regulations; balancing the budget. But once those chores are accomplished, the

matter of an expanding money supply remains. How can we make sure that the Federal Reserve, through its open-market activities (buying and selling government securities) and through its control over banks (setting the discount rate—the cost of funds borrowed from the Fed by banks themselves), doesn't pump too much money into the economy?

Lehrman's answer is to go back to the system that Franklin D. Roosevelt ended in 1933. Before that date, the federal government pledged to convert \$20.67 into an ounce of gold any time a citizen demanded it. After that date, the United States promised to convert thirty-five dollars into an ounce of gold—but only for foreign governments, not for American citizens, who were banned from even owning gold from 1934 until 1975, when James Blanchard's original New Orleans organization, the National Committee to Legalize Gold, won a four-year lobbying battle. Meanwhile, in 1971, President Richard Nixon defaulted at the gold window, refusing to convert dollars held by the British into gold. "Monetary restraint," writes Robert A. Mundell, a professor of economics at Columbia and a co-religionist of Laffer's, "then rested only on the limits self-imposed by central bankers and their political bosses, a flimsy reed on which to base monetary stability."

And so, since 1971, there has been no monetary stability. Consumer prices have doubled; foreign-exchange markets have seen their worst wrenching in history, with the dollar losing half its value to the German mark and more than half to the Swiss franc; long-term bond markets have been virtually destroyed; and gold has soared from \$35 to \$850 an ounce, and stood at the end of 1980 at around \$600.

It may come as a surprise to Americans, whose memories are notoriously short, to learn that there was monetary stability, with brief exceptions, during all of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth. "From 1792 to the 1930s," writes Roy Jastram, a Berkeley economics professor who is the author of *The Golden Constant*, a study of historic price fluctuations, "Britain was on a gold standard and the United States was on either a bi-metallic standard (gold and silver) or one of gold alone. During all those years, in both countries, price inflations and subsequent deflations average out sensibly to zero. The result: for both the U.K. and the U.S., the wholesale price index numbers at the end of the gold standard were at just the level of 1800. Quite a record."

What went wrong? Men, it turned out, could not manage something as huge and volatile as a nation's money supply, just as history has shown they can't manage prices or wages or any other macro-component of the market. The sixties and early seventies, however, were a period when men in their arrogance thought

that the human mind, aided by computers, could do anything it set out to do. The experts were wrong from the start. Hardly anyone believed the price of gold would rise after the U.S. stopped guaranteeing its price. Henry Reuss, chairman of the House Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee, predicted it would fall to \$6 an ounce. The London *Economist*, in a 1960 fantasy based on what it supposed to be fact, forecast that gold would fall to \$2.50 with demonetization. "Nobody," said Federal Reserve Governor Henry Wallich, "ever thought what would happen if we went off gold and the price went sky-high." Financial experts at the time had the feeling that the U.S. government was *subsidizing* gold by guaranteeing to pay \$35 an ounce. They could not have been further off. In fact, with the dollar cut loose from the discipline of gold, investors believed that the Federal Reserve, under political pressure, could not resist the temptation to print money. So investors moved out of dollars and into gold, and the price of gold in dollars soared.

The investors were right. The Fed—even though it was run for the most part by conservative monetarists (Arthur Burns, Paul Volcker)—pursued an expansionary money policy. What is not clear is whether the Fed did so under political pressure or through ignorance. Lehrman, kindly, chooses the latter. He argues that, in order to know how much money to print, the Fed must know the demand for cash in the economy. This is something it can't possibly know precisely. "If individuals, businesses, and other entities largely generate the demand for money, the Fed must have providential omniscience to calculate correctly, on a daily or weekly basis, the total demand." The Fed, in fact, can't even tell with accuracy how much money is circulating. So, writes Lehrman in his Morgan Stanley paper, we can have little faith in the Fed's ability to stabilize the money supply. "This is no criticism of the Fed. On the contrary, it is merely to acknowledge the limits of the human mind."

The Fed has erred, quite naturally, on the side of expansion. Expanding the currency helps finance the budget deficit and causes far less short-run pain to the populace. After a while, however, cash balances in excess of demand result in too much money chasing too few goods. The result: virulent inflation.

If the human mind can't determine the proper level for the money supply, it is not easy to understand how a metal, shiny or not, can do the trick. Let's examine how the gold standard works. The United States guarantees that it will convert a fixed number of dollars (say, 600) into an ounce of gold and vice versa. Anyone can stand at the gold window of the Fed and demand an ounce of gold for \$600 in cash, and anyone can stand at the cash window of the Fed and demand \$600 in cash for an ounce of gold. Now, observe how this

neat system prevents the Fed from pumping too much money into the economy. If there is an excess supply of money, then the general price level will rise, but the gold price (\$600 an ounce) must by law remain the same. Gold, in other words, would become cheap in relation to socks and carrots. So demand for gold would increase. Thousands of people, perhaps millions, would line up at the gold window, exchanging their dollars for metal. "The failure to redeem these excess dollars for gold would, under convertibility rules, threaten the bankruptcy and dissolution" of the Fed, writes Lehrman. The Fed, then, would be forced to reduce the growth of credit and money—using its traditional tools (its activity in the government bond market and its control of the discount rate)—until there were no more excess cash balances in the economy.

How would the Fed know that point was reached? The line at the gold window would be drastically shortened; in fact, people might begin lining up in equal numbers at the money window. Equilibrium would be restored.

The gold standard provides an "error signal." It tells the Fed that it is creating money too fast (a long line at the gold window) or too slowly (a long line at the money window). The goal is to create equal lines—or no lines at all. Gold serves as a stand-in, a symbol, for all commodities. With the price of gold fixed by the government, the prices of all commodities fluctuate only through market forces—competition, supply, and replacement—not through general rises in the price level.

Why gold as the standard? Economist Milton Friedman has suggested that pork bellies would do just as well; Jude Wanniski, author of the most lucid supply-side treatise, *The Way the World Works*, has suggested cinder blocks. But both those commodities are too cumbersome, too vulnerable to market forces. People are always finding ways to raise hogs or make building materials more cheaply, but, according to Lehrman, throughout history production of gold has increased steadily at a rate of about 2 percent a year—the same as the growth of real output and of the population. Its properties are perfect for a monetary standard—a condition that Lehrman and others intimate is "providential."

Under the Helms bill, the Fed would be required to do more than watch the lines at its windows. It would have to maintain a specific ratio of the cash value of U.S. gold reserves to the monetary base. Currently, the government owns 265 million ounces of gold, and Laffer estimates that a likely ratio of gold to money would be 40 percent. The Fed could operate around that 40 percent, but the law would forbid it from letting the ratio drop below, say, 30 percent. The practical effect of the gold standard would be that the federal govern-

ment would have a difficult time running deficits, since the Federal Reserve would be loath to finance them by printing more money. The gold standard would put severe limits on what the Fed can do, and Lehrman thinks those limits would provide "virtually a constitutional guarantee of the purchasing power of money and therefore of the future value of savings."

Although the stated purpose of the National Committee for Monetary Reform is to bring back the gold standard, the men and women who attended the conference have gotten along quite well without it. Indeed, remonetization of gold would provide the perfect occasion for Dines's MVAOOAO-GASSS, his all-out-sell signal. The convertibility price, under Helms's bill, would be determined by the

Gold bugs know that remonetization could end their bonanza.

market price 180 days after the bill became law. How high would it be? No one knows, but it's doubtful that it would be much higher than when the bill was passed. Remember that gold, as an investment, has a future value built into its price; with the government fixing the gold price forever, that future value disappears. If the Helms bill were passed tomorrow, a conversion price of \$600 would be likely, but \$300 or \$200 or \$100 would not be out of the question.

Gold bugs, being shrewd, know that remonetization could end their bonanza. (Robert Mundell predicts that, without a gold standard, the price could hit \$10,000 an ounce within a generation.) And there is a curious soft-pedaling of the issue, even in the NCMR's official publications. Blanchard, for instance, is quoted in one handbook as saying, "There is very little chance for the establishment of a gold standard in the foreseeable future." And a good thing for him, too. His 1980 New Orleans conference, the nineteenth he has put on in the past seven years, grossed around \$2 million. He pays up to \$12,000 to attract such big names as columnist George Will, *Wall Street Week* television host Louis Rukeyser, and mainstream financial writers Albert J. Lowry, Eliot Janeway, and Richard Russell. They lend respectability to the "hard-money newsletter boys" who dominate the meeting.

If remonetization does occur, and the hard-money boys take a beating, the demise of their newsletters will be a serious literary loss. The communications, as wacky as some of them may be, are a delight to read—

pithy, emphatic, and spiced with a lively vocabulary. Here are some samples:

- *The L. T. Patterson Strategy Letter*. A combination of financial advice ("Swiss francs should be borrowed—or shorted against gold—due to low interest rate of 7%") and diatribes against the Trilateral Commission, the 300-member policy-discussion group that was started by David Rockefeller and includes among its members Jimmy Carter, George Bush, John Anderson, Lane Kirkland, Philip Caldwell of Ford, and J. Paul Austin of Coca-Cola. Gold bugs of the conspiracy-theory school were convinced that the Trilaterals had fixed the 1980 election so Carter could win, but Bush was there to keep an eye on Reagan just in case. Trilaterals conspire to run the world (with socialist help) and are out to destroy the dollar for their own nefarious interests. A typical Patterson item: "The Tuesday, Aug. 19th New York Times (Op. Ed. section) carried a letter accusing the Trilateral Commission of trying to rig the election in favor of—wait for it!—Ronald Reagan! This letter (I believe planted) will of course diffuse any possible furore that might develop over Trilateral Commission policies." The latest Trilateral plot, learned from speakers at the conference, is to take over the world's food supply. *The Patterson Letter*, published every fourth week, carries a typical hard-money price tag, \$149.95 a year, and a typical hard-money mailing address. P.O. Box 1059, 4001 Basel, Switzerland. Patterson lives in Cincinnati.

- *The International Harry Schultz Letter*. Patterson spoke at the New Orleans conference, but Harry Schultz—who actually lives in Switzerland and is perpetually offshore, evidently for tax reasons—did not. *The Schultz Letter*, "published every 3-4 weeks" and costing \$258 a year (single copy, \$25), is written in a language all its own: "At last, here's the *real* story on how Mugabe won the Rhodesian election & why it surprized everyone. Had it been an *honest* election, Bishop Muzorewa wud probably have won 36seats, Mugabe 24seats & Nkomo 20seats. An hslm [*Harry Schultz Letter* man] bizman who lives there gave me this inside story. . . ." Again, it's a combination of right-wing politics, whispered confidences, and specific investment advice: "Arab buying was evident in silver in Sept. Euro mkts only . . . Grain harvest estimates trimmed (price bullish) . . . USSR buying coffee . . . Gold: gave longterm bull signals. Shortterm is foggy. London fix chart needs 2fixes over 694 to give traders buy cue . . ."

- *The Dines Letter*. Jim Dines is so outrageous, so entertaining, that it's hard not to like him. His keynote address at the New Orleans conference was filled with Dinesisms—wild predictions, self-flattery, exhortations to the audience to "Go for blood! Octuple your money!" Dines started strong: "I predict the Dow

Jones Industrials will go to 570 within the next months—no hedging . . . This is a daring prediction . . . This is a spectacular call . . . Sell your stocks tomorrow morning. Get liquid and pay off your debts. Sell IBM, sell investment real estate, sell oil." Dines sees interest rates heading to 25 percent, large-scale bankruptcies, and deflation—yes, not inflation but a *drop* in prices. Still, he likes gold. Dines, who was born in New York and lives in California, graduated from Oberlin and Columbia Law School. As he tells it, he was booted out of the Wall Street investment firm of A. M. Kidder & Co. for predicting that gold would rise from \$35 an ounce to \$400. He began publishing *The Dines Letter* in 1962, urging his readers to buy ASA, the South African mining stock, at \$2.50 a share (at the beginning of December 1980 it was \$79). Even in August, with ASA reaching new highs almost every day, he was telling his readers: "Having seen these Upside Breakouts, we now get down on our bended knees and beg you to buy these shares immediately . . . Buy more . . . *No selling business, only buying.*" He repeats his eighteen-year-old slogan: "All the way with ASA." That's ATWWASA, of course. Dines, for all his eccentricity and stagecraft, has an uncanny ability to call interest-rate turns correctly. He has kept his readers in gold and made a fortune for them. He said in New Orleans, "Many of you have told me, 'You have made me a millionaire, Mr. Dines.' This gives me great personal satisfaction. It's worth all the abuse I suffered during the years I recommended gold. Many of my peers averted their gaze from my eyes. But I have no bitterness." Readers keep waiting for MVAOOAO-GASSS and happily pay \$150 a year (twenty-six issues) for the privilege.

Patterson, Schultz, and Dines are unlikely prophets, but for the cult of gold they do quite nicely. Like biblical prophets, they were sought out by people in distress, and they made remarkably accurate predictions, as though they had a pipeline to God. But, as their followers increase, there's a growing sense that the excitement is over. As Harry Browne put it: "What we understand here today is common knowledge. We are no longer on the outside. We are on the inside." *Money* magazine is recommending gold as an investment. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that conservative money managers are putting their clients into it: "Banks, pension funds, college endowments, mutual funds, and insurance companies are slowly catching the fever that once afflicted only Europeans, Arabs, and assorted speculators and doomsayers." What was once a cult is becoming a religion, even a secular philosophy. No wonder the men and women at the Rivergate were so uncomfortable. Perhaps Browne is right when he advises, "It is now time to look for something else." □

TEACHING A STONE TO TALK

by Annie Dillard

Wherever there is stillness there is the still
small voice, nature's old song and dance . . .
A meditation on silence and other matters.

The island where I live is peopled with cranks
like myself. In a cedar-shake shack on a cliff is
a man in his thirties who lives alone with a
stone he is trying to teach to talk.

Wisecracks on this topic abound, as you might
expect, but they are made, as it were, perfunctorily,
and mostly by the young. For in fact, almost everyone
here respects what Larry is doing, as do I, which is why
I am protecting his (or her) privacy, and confusing for
you the details. It could be, for instance, a pinch of
sand he is teaching to talk, or a prolonged northerly, or
any one of a number of waves. But it is, I assure you, a
stone. It is—for I have seen it—a palm-sized, oval
beach cobble whose dark gray is cut by a band of white
which runs around and, presumably, through it; such
stones we call “wishing stones,” for reasons obscure
but not, I think, unimaginable.

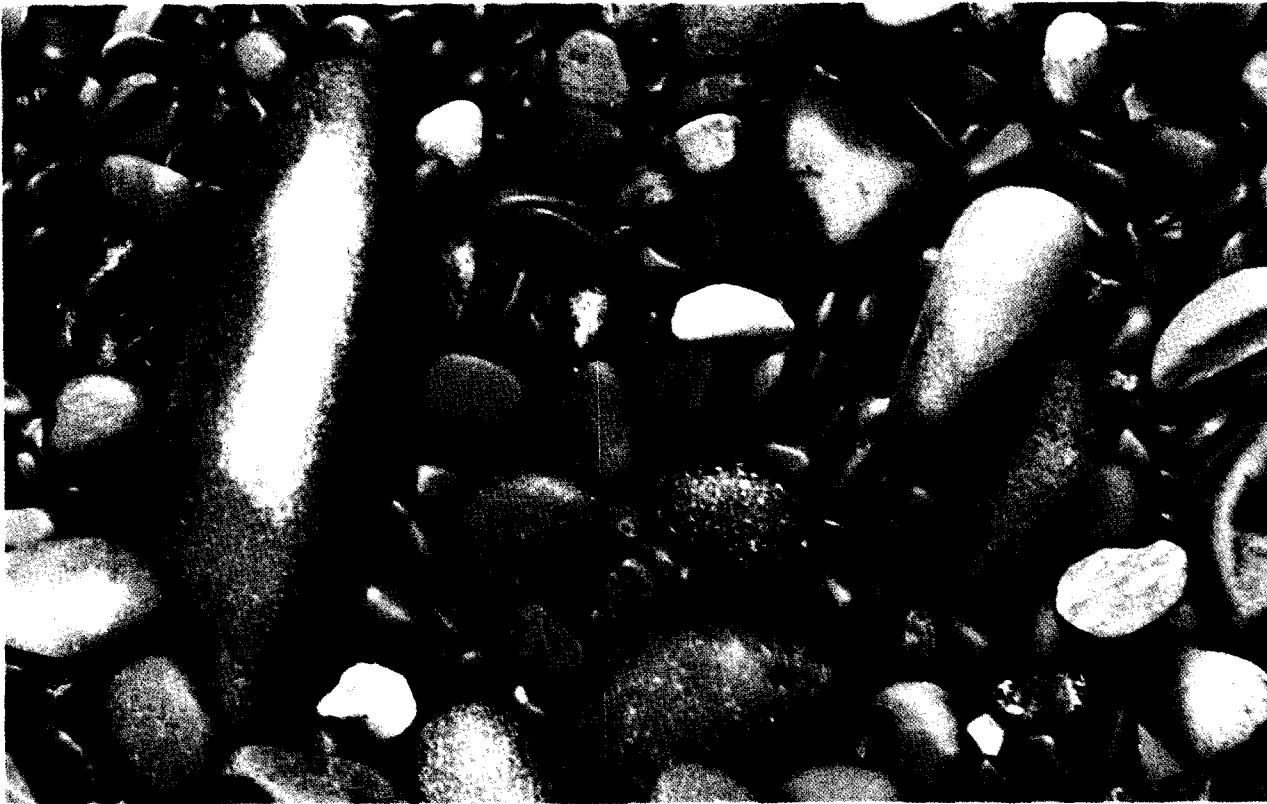
He keeps it on a shelf. Usually the stone lies pro-
tected by a square of untanned leather, like a canary
asleep under its cloth. Larry removes the cover for the

stone's lessons, or, more accurately, I should say for
the ritual or rituals they perform together several times
a day.

No one knows what goes on at these sessions, least of
all myself, for I know Larry but slightly, and that
owing only to a mix-up in our mail. I assume that, like
any other meaningful effort, the ritual involves sacri-
fice, the suppression of self-consciousness, and a cer-
tain precise tilt of the will, so that the will becomes
transparent and hollow, a channel for the work. I wish
him well. It is a noble work, and beats, from any angle,
selling shoes.

Reports differ on precisely what he expects or wants
the stone to say. I do not think he expects the stone to
speak as we do, and describe for us its long life and
many, or few, sensations. I think instead that he is
trying to teach it to say a single word, such as “cup,” or
“uncle.” For this purpose he has not, as some have
seriously suggested, carved the stone a little mouth, or
furnished it in any way with a pocket of air which it
might then expel. Rather—and I think he is wise in
this—he plans to initiate his son, who is now an infant
living with Larry's estranged wife, into the work, so
that it may continue and bear fruit after his death.

Nature's silence is its one remark, and every flake of
world is a chip off that old mute and immutable block.



The Chinese say that we live in the world of the ten thousand things. Each of the ten thousand cries out to us precisely nothing.

God used to rage at the Israelites for frequenting sacred groves. I wish I could find one. Martin Buber says, "The crisis of all primitive mankind comes with the discovery of that which is fundamentally not-holy, the a-sacramental, which withstands the methods, and which has no 'hour,' a province which steadily enlarges itself." Now we are no longer primitive; now the whole world seems not-holy. We have drained the light from the boughs in the sacred grove and snuffed it in the high places and along the banks of sacred streams. We as a people have moved from pantheism to panatheism. Silence is not our heritage but our destiny; we live where we want to live.

The soul may ask God for anything, and never fail. You may ask God for his presence, or for wisdom, and receive each at his hands. Or you may ask God, in the words of the shopkeeper's little gag sign, that he not go away mad, but just go away. Once, in Israel, an extended family of nomads did that. They heard God's speech and found it too loud. The wilderness generation was at Sinai; it witnessed there the thick darkness where God was: "And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking." It scared them witless.

Then they asked Moses to beg God, please, never to speak to them directly again. "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." Moses took the message. And God, pitying their fear, agreed. And he added to Moses, "Go say to them, *Get into your tents again.*"

It is difficult to undo our own damage, and to recall to our presence that which we have asked to leave. It is hard to desecrate a grove and change your mind. The very holy mountains are keeping mum. We doused the burning bush and cannot rekindle it; we are lighting matches in vain under every green tree. Did the wind once cry, and the hills shout forth praise? Now speech has perished from among the lifeless things of earth, and living things say very little to very few. Birds may crank out sweet gibberish and monkeys howl; horses neigh and pigs say, as you recall, oink oink. But so do cobbles rumble when a wave recedes, and thunders break the air in lightning storms. I call these noises silence. It could be that wherever there is motion there is noise, as when a whale breeches and smacks the water—and wherever there is stillness there is the still small voice, God's speaking from the whirlwind, nature's old song and dance, the show we drove from town. At any rate, now it is all we can do, and among our best efforts, to try to teach a given human language, English, to chimpanzees.

In the forties an American psychologist and his wife tried to teach a chimp actually to speak. At the end of three years the creature could pronounce, in a hoarse whisper, the words “mama,” “papa,” and “cup.” After another three years of training she could whisper, with difficulty, still only “mama,” “papa,” and “cup.” The more recent successes at teaching chimpanzees American Sign Language are well known. Just the other day a chimp told us, if we can believe that we truly share a vocabulary, that she had been sad in the morning. I’m sorry we asked.

What have we been doing all these centuries but trying to call God back to the mountain, or, failing that, raise a peep out of anything that isn’t us? What is the difference between a cathedral and a physics lab? Are they not both saying Hello? We spy on whales and on interstellar radio objects; we starve ourselves and pray till we’re blue.

I have been reading comparative cosmology. At this time most cosmologists favor the picture of the evolving universe described by Lemaître and Gamow. But I prefer a suggestion made years ago by Paul Valéry. He set forth the notion that the universe might be “head-shaped.” To what is the head listening, what does it see, of what does it think? Or is the universe and all it contains a snippet of mind?

The mountains are great stone bells; they clang together like nuns. Who shushed the stars? A thousand million galaxies are easily seen in the Palomar reflector; collisions between and among them do, of course, occur. But these collisions are very long and silent slides. Billions of stars sift among each other untouched, too distant even to be moved, heedless as always, hushed. The sea pronounces something, over and over, in a hoarse whisper; I can’t quite make it out. But God knows I’ve tried.

At a certain point you say to the woods, to the sea, to the mountains, the world, Now I am ready. Now I will stop and be wholly attentive. You empty yourself and wait, listening. After a time you hear it: there is nothing there. There is nothing but those things only, those created objects, discrete, growing or holding, or swaying, being rained on or raining, held, flooding or ebbing, standing, or spread. You feel the world’s word as a tension, a hum, a single chorused note everywhere the same. This is it: this hum is the silence. Nature does utter a peep—just this one. The birds and insects, the meadows and swamps and rivers and stones and mountains and clouds: they all do it; they all don’t do it. There is a vibrancy to the silence, a suppression, as if someone were gagging the world. But you wait, you

give your life’s length to listening, and nothing happens. The ice rolls up, the ice rolls back, and still that single note obtains. The tension, or lack of it, is intolerable. The silence is not actually suppression; instead, it is all there is.

We are here to witness. There is nothing else to do with those mute materials we do not need. Until Larry teaches his stone to talk, until God changes his mind, or until the pagan gods slip back to their hilltop groves, all we can do with the whole inhuman array is watch it. We can stage our own act on the planet—build our cities on its plains, dam its rivers, plant its topsoils—but our meaningful activity scarcely covers the terrain. We don’t use the songbirds, for instance. We don’t eat many of them; we can’t befriend them; we can’t persuade them to eat more mosquitoes or plant fewer weed seeds. We can only witness them—whoever they are. If we weren’t here, they would be songbirds falling in the forest. If we weren’t here, material events such as the passage of seasons would lack even the meager meanings we are able to muster for them. The show would play to an empty house, as do all those stars that fall in the daytime. That is why I take walks: to keep an eye on things. And that is why I went to the Galapagos Islands.

All of this becomes especially clear on the Galapagos Islands. The Galapagos Islands blew up out of the ocean, some plants blew in on them, some animals drifted aboard and evolved weird forms—and there they all are. The Galapagos are a kind of metaphysics laboratory, almost wholly uncluttered by human culture or history. Whatever happens on those bare volcanic rocks happens in full view, whether anyone is watching or not.

What happens there is this, and precious little it is: clouds come and go as well as the round of similar seasons; a pig eats a tortoise or doesn’t eat a tortoise; Pacific waves fall up and slide back; a lichen expands; night follows day; an albatross dies and dries on a cliff; a cool current upwells from the ocean floor; fishes multiply, flies swarm, stars rise and fall, and diving birds dive. The news, in other words, breaks on the beaches. And taking it all in are the trees. The palo santo trees crowd the hillsides like any outdoor audience; they face the lagoons, the lava lowlands, and the shores.

I have some experience of these palo santo trees. They interest me as emblems of the muteness of the human stance in relation to all that is not human. I see us all as palo santo trees, holy sticks, together watching everything that we watch, and growing in silence.

In the Galapagos, I didn’t notice the palo santo trees for a long time. Like everyone else, I specialized in sea

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lions. My shipmates and I liked the sea lions, and envied their lives. Their joy seemed conscious. They were engaged in full-time play. They were all either fat or dead. By day they played in the shallows, alone or together, greeting each other and us with great noises of joy, or they took a turn offshore and body-surfed in the breakers, exultant. By night on the sand they lay in each other's flippers and slept. My shipmates joked, often, that when they "came back," they would just as soon do it all over again as sea lions. I concurred. The sea lion game looked unbeatable.

But, a year and a half later, I returned to those unpeopled islands. In the interval my attachment to them had shifted, and my memories of them had altered, the way memories do, like particolored pebbles rolled back and forth over a grating, so that after a time those hard bright ones, the ones you thought you would never lose, have vanished, passed through the grating, and only a few big, unexpected ones remain, no longer unnoticed but now selected out for some meaning, large and unknown.

Such were the palo santo trees. Before, I had never given them a thought. They were just miles of half-dead trees on the red lava sea cliffs of some deserted islands. They were only a name in a notebook: "Palo santo—those strange white trees." Look at the sea lions! Look at the flightless cormorants, the penguins, the iguanas, the sunset! But after eighteen months the wonderful cormorants, penguins, iguanas, sunsets, and even the sea lions had dropped from my holey heart. I returned to the Galapagos to see the palo santo trees.

They are thin, pale, wispy trees. You walk among them on the lowland deserts, where they grow beside the prickly pear. You see them from the water on the steepes that face the sea, hundreds together small and thin and spread, and so much more pale than their red soils that any black-and-white print of them looks like a negative. Their stands look like blasted orchards. At every season they all seem newly dead, pale and bare as birches drowned in a beaver pond—for at every season they look leafless, paralyzed, and mute. But, in fact, you can see during the rainy months a few meager deciduous leaves here and there on their brittle twigs. And hundreds of lichens always grow on their bark in overlapping explosions which barely enlarge in the course of the decade, lichens pink and orange, lavender, yellow, and green. The palo santo trees bear the lichens effortlessly, unconsciously, the way they bear everything. Their multitudes, transparent as line drawings, crowd the cliffsides like whirling dancers, like empty groves, and look out over cliff-wrecked breakers toward more unpeopled islands, with their freakish lizards and birds, toward the grieving lagoons and the bays where the sea lions wander, and beyond to the clamoring seas.

Now I no longer concurred with my shipmates' joke; I no longer wanted to "come back" as a sea lion. For I thought, and I still think, that if I came back to life in the sunlight where everything changes, I would like to come back as a palo santo tree, one of thousands on a cliffside on those godforsaken islands, where a million events occur among the witless, where a splash of rain may drop on a yellow iguana the size of a dachshund, and ten minutes later the iguana may blink. I would like to come back as a palo santo tree on the weather side of an island, so that I could be, myself, a perfect witness, and look, mute, and wave my arms.

The silence is all there is. It is the alpha and the omega. It is God's brooding over the face of the waters; it is the blended note of the ten thousand things, the whine of wings. You take a step in the right direction to pray to this silence, and even to address the prayer to "World." Distinctions blur. Quit your tents. Pray without ceasing. □

ART by Michael Harris

I want to be the man
in Rodin's The Kiss
or Brancusi's The Kiss

I want to be among
the essential
kissers of all time

I know a kiss
is just a kiss
is just a cushioned push

of face, a slippery wash
of lips that blush
then turn to ice, to fall

lake-ice, to ice as
delicate as lace
as hard and cold as love

whose dream is seed
and bitter red and not
these soft kisses, breathless

RITE OF PASSAGE

A memoir

by Anthony Brandt

Some things that happen to us can't be borne, with the paradoxical result that we carry them on our backs the rest of our lives. I have been half obsessed for almost thirty years with the death of my grandmother. I should say with her dying: with the long and terrible changes that came at the worst time for a boy of twelve and thirteen, going through his own difficult changes. It felt like and perhaps was the equivalent of a puberty rite: dark, frightening, aboriginal, an obscure emotional exchange between old and young. It has become part of my character.

I grew up in New Jersey in a suburban town where my brother still lives and practices law. One might best describe it as quiet, protected, and green; it was no preparation for death. Tall, graceful elm trees lined both sides of the street where we lived. My father's brother-in-law, a contractor, built our house; we moved into it a year after I was born. My grandmother and grandfather (my mother's parents; they were the only grandparents who mattered) lived up the street "on the hill"; it wasn't much of a hill, the terrain in that part of New Jersey being what it is, but we could ride our sleds down the street after it snowed, and that was hilly enough.

Our family lived, or seemed to a young boy to live, in very stable, very ordinary patterns. My father commuted to New York every day, taking the Jersey Central Railroad, riding in cars that had windows you could open, getting off the train in Jersey City and taking a ferry to Manhattan. He held the same job in the same company for more than thirty years. The son of Swedish immigrants, he was a funny man who could wiggle his ears without raising his eyebrows and made up the most dreadful puns. When he wasn't being funny he was quiet, the newspaper his shield and companion, or the *Saturday Evening Post*, which he brought home without fail every Wednesday evening, or *Life*, which he brought home Fridays. It was hard to break through the quiet and the humor, and after he died my mother said, as much puzzled as disturbed, that she hardly knew him at all.

She, the backbone of the family, was fierce, stern, the kind of person who can cow you with a glance. My brother and I, and my cousins, were all a little in awe of her. The ruling passion in her life was to protect her family; she lived in a set of concentric circles, sons and husband the closest, then nieces, nephews, brothers, parents, then more distant relatives, and outside that a

few friends, very few. No one and nothing else existed for her; she had no interest in politics, art, history, or even the price of eggs. "Fierce" is the best word for her, or single-minded. In those days (I was born in 1936) polio was every parent's bugbear; she, to keep my brother and me away from places where the disease was supposed to be communicated, particularly swimming pools, took us every summer for the entire summer to the Jersey shore, first to her parents' cottage, later to a little cottage she and my father bought. She did that even though it meant being separated from my father for nearly three months, having nobody to talk to, having to handle my brother and me on her own. She hated it, she told us years later, but she did it: fiercely. Or there's the story of one of my cousins who got pregnant when she was sixteen or seventeen; my mother took her into our house, managed somehow to hide her condition from the neighbors, then, after the birth, arranged privately to have the child adopted by a family the doctor recommended, all this being done without consulting the proper authorities, and for the rest of her life never told a single person how she made these arrangements or where she had placed the child. She was a genuine primitive, like some tough old peasant woman. Yet her name was Grace, her nickname Bunny; if you saw through the fierceness, you understood that it was a version of love.

Her mother, my grandmother, seemed anything but fierce. One of our weekly routines was Sunday dinner at their house on the hill, some five or six houses from ours. When I was very young, before World War II, the house had a mansard roof, a barn in the back, lots of yard space, lots of rooms inside, and a cherry tree. I thought it was

a palace. Actually it was rather small, and became smaller when my grandmother insisted on tearing down the mansard roof and replacing it with a conventional peaked roof; the house lost three attic rooms in the process. Sunday dinner was invariably roast beef or chicken or leg of lamb with mashed potatoes and vegetables, standard American fare but cooked by my grandparents' Polish maid, Josephine, not by my grandmother. Josephine made wonderful pies in an old cast-iron coal stove and used to let me tie her with



string to the kitchen sink. My grandfather was a gentle man who smoked a pipe, had a bristly reddish moustache, and always seemed to wind up paying everybody else's debts in the family; my mother worshipped him. There were usually lots of uncles at these meals, and they were a playful bunch. I have a very early memory of two of them tossing me back and forth between them, and another of the youngest, whose name was Don, carrying me on his shoulders into the surf. I also remember my grandmother presiding at these meals. She was gray-haired and benign.

Later they sold that house. My benign grandmother, I've been told since, was in fact a restless, unsatisfied woman; changing the roof line, moving from house to house, were her ways of expressing that dissatisfaction. In the next house, I think it was, my grandfather died; my grandmother moved again, then again, and then to a house down the street, at the bottom of the hill this time, and there I got to know her better. I was nine or ten years old. She let me throw a tennis ball against the side of the house for hours at a time; the noise must have been terribly aggravating. She cooked lunch for me and used to make pancakes the size of dinner plates, and corn fritters. She also made me a whole set of yarn figures a few inches long, rolling yarn around her hand, taking the roll and tying off arms, legs, and a head,

then sewing a face onto the head with black thread. I played with these and an odd assortment of hand-me-down toy soldiers for long afternoons, setting up wars, football games, contests of all kinds, and designating particular yarn figures as customary heroes. Together we played a spelling game: I'd be on the floor playing with the yarn figures, she'd be writing a letter and ask me how to spell "appreciate" (it was always that word), and I'd spell it for her while she pretended to be impressed with my spelling ability and I pretended that she hadn't asked me to spell that same word a dozen times before. I was good, too, at helping her find her glasses.

One scene at this house stands out. My uncle Bob came home from the war and the whole family, his young wife, other uncles, my mother and father and brother and I, gathered at the house to meet him, and he came in wearing his captain's uniform and looking to me, I swear it, like a handsome young god. In fact he was an ordinary man who spent the rest of his life selling insurance. He had been in New Guinea, a ground officer in the Air Corps, and the story I remember is of the native who came into his tent one day and took a great deal of interest in the scissors my uncle was using. The native asked in pidgin English what my uncle would require for the scissors in trade, and he jokingly said, well, how about a tentful of bananas. Sure enough, several days later two or three hundred natives came out of the jungle, huge bunches of bananas on their shoulders, and filled my uncle's tent.

Things went on this way for I don't know how long, maybe two years, maybe three. I don't want to describe it as idyllic. Youth has its problems. But this old woman who could never find her glasses was wonderful to me, a grandmother in the true likeness of one, and I couldn't understand the changes when they came. She moved again, against all advice, this time to a big, bare apartment on the other side of town. She was gradually becoming irritable and difficult, not much fun to be around. There were no more spelling games; she stopped writing letters. Because she moved I saw her less often, and her home could no longer be a haven for me. She neglected it, too; it grew dirtier and dirtier, until my mother eventually had to do her cleaning for her.

Then she began to see things that weren't there. A branch in the back yard became a woman, I remember, who apparently wasn't fully clothed, and a man was doing something to her, something unspeakable. She developed diabetes and my mother learned to give her

insulin shots, but she wouldn't stop eating candy, the worst thing for her, and the diabetes got worse. Her face began to change, to slacken, to lose its shape and character. I didn't understand these things; arteriosclerosis, hardening of the arteries, whatever the explanation, it was only words. What I noticed was that her white hair was getting thinner and harder to control, that she herself seemed to be shrinking even as I grew, that when she looked at me I wasn't sure it was me she was seeing anymore.

After a few months of this, we brought her to live with us. My mother was determined to take care of her, and certain family pressures were brought to bear too. That private man my father didn't like the idea at all, but he said nothing, which was his way. And she was put in my brother's bedroom over the garage, my brother moving in with me. It was a small house, six rooms and a basement, much too small for what we had to face.

What we had to face was a rapid deterioration into senile dementia and the rise from beneath the surface of this smiling, kindly, white-haired old lady of something truly ugly. Whenever she was awake she called for attention, calling, calling a hundred times a day. Restless as always, she picked the bedclothes off, tore holes in sheets and pillows, took off her nightclothes and sat naked talking to herself. She hallucinated more and more frequently, addressing her dead husband, a dead brother, scolding, shouting at their apparitions. She became incontinent and smeared feces on herself, the furniture, the walls. And always calling—"Bunny, where are you? Bunny, I want you!"—scolding, demanding; she could seldom remember what she wanted when my mother came. It became an important event when she fell asleep; to make sure she stayed asleep the radio was kept off, the four of us tiptoed around the house, and when I went out to close the garage door, directly under her window (it was an overhead door and had to be pulled down), I did it so slowly and carefully, half an inch at a time, that it sometimes took me a full fifteen minutes to get it down.

That my mother endured this for six months is a testimony to her strength and determination, but it was really beyond her and almost destroyed her health. My grandmother didn't often sleep through the night; she would wake up, yell, cry, a creature of disorder, a living *memento mori*, and my mother would have to tend to her. The house began to smell in spite of all my mother's efforts to keep my grandmother's room clean. My father, his peace gone, brooded in his chair behind his newspaper. My brother and I fought for *Lebensraum*, each of us trying to grow up in his own way. People avoided us. My uncles were living elsewhere—Miami, Cleveland, Delaware. My grandmother's two surviving sisters, who lived about ten blocks away, never came to

Anthony Brandt, journalist, essayist, and author of *Reality Police*, is at work on a book on the American Dream.

see her. Everybody seemed to sense that something obscene was happening, and stayed away. Terrified, I stayed away, too. I heard my grandmother constantly, but in the six months she lived with us I think I went into her room only once. That was as my mother wished it. She was a nightmare, naked and filthy without warning.

After six months, at my father's insistence, after a night nurse had been hired and left, after my mother had reached her limits and beyond, my parents started looking for a nursing home, anyplace they could put her. It became a family scandal; the two sisters were outraged that my mother would consider putting her own mother in a home, there were telephone calls back and forth between them and my uncles, but of course the sisters had never come to see her themselves, and my mother never forgave them. One of my uncles finally came from Cleveland, saw what was happening, and that day they put my grandmother in a car and drove her off to the nearest state mental hospital. They brought her back the same day; desperate as they were, they couldn't leave her in hell. At last, when it had come time to go to the shore, they found a nursing home in the middle of the Pine Barrens, miles from anywhere, and kept her there for a while. That, too, proving unsatisfactory, they put her in a small nursing home in western New Jersey, about two hours away by car. We made the drive every Sunday for the next six months, until my grandmother finally died. I always waited in the car while my mother visited her. At the funeral I refused to go into the room for one last look at the body. I was afraid of her still. The whole thing had been a subtle act of violence, a violation of the sensibilities, made all the worse by the fact that I knew it wasn't really her fault, that she was a victim of biology, of life itself. Hard knowledge for a boy just turned fourteen. She became the color of all my expectations.

Life is savage, then, and even character is insecure. Call no man happy until he be dead, said the Greek lawgiver Solon. But what would a wise man say to this? In that same town in New Jersey, that town I have long since abandoned as too flat and too good to be true, my mother, thirty years older now, weighing in at ninety-two pounds, incontinent, her white hair wild about her head, sits strapped into a chair in another nursing home talking incoherently to her fellow patients and working her hands at the figures she thinks she sees moving around on the floor. It's enough to make stones weep to see this fierce, strong woman, who paid her dues, surely, ten times over, reduced to this.

Yet she is *cheerful*. This son comes to see her and

she quite literally babbles with delight, introduces him (as her father, her husband—the connections are burnt out) to the aides, tells him endless stories that don't make any sense at all, and *shines*, shines with a clear light that must be her soul. Care and bitterness vanish in her presence. Helpless, the victim of numerous tiny strokes—"shower strokes," the doctors call them—that are gradually destroying her brain, she has somehow achieved a radiant serenity that accepts everything that happens and incorporates and transforms it.

Is there a lesson in this? Is some pattern larger than life working itself out; is this some kind of poetic justice on display, a mother balancing a grandmother, gods demonstrating reasons beyond our comprehension? It was a bitter thing to put her into that place, reeking of disinfectant, full of senile, dying old people, and I used to hate to visit her there, but as she has deteriorated she has also by sheer force of example managed to change my attitude. If she can be reconciled to all this, why can't I? It doesn't last very long, but after I've seen her, talked to her for half an hour, helped feed her, stroked her hair, I walk away amazed, as if I had been witness to a miracle. □

METAPHORS OF WOMEN

by Katha Pollitt

What if the moon
was never a beautiful woman?
Call it a shark shearing across black water.
An ear. A drum in a desert.
A window. A bone shoe.

What if the sea
was discovered to have no womb?
Let it be clouds, blue as the day they were born.
A ceremony of bells and questions.
A toothache. A lost twin.

What if a woman
is not the moon or the sea?
Say map of the air. Say green parabola.
Lichen and the stone that feeds it.
No rain. Rain.

OF SEX AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

by
Francis X. Murphy, C.S.S.R.

When the bishops' synod on the Christian family convened in Rome last fall, there were hopes that the Church would reform its position on such crucial issues as birth control and divorce. But, despite pleas from liberal prelates around the world, the Vatican-dominated synod reaffirmed the precedence of law over compassion.

In the midst of a general audience in the Vatican last October, Pope John Paul II said: "If a man gazes on his wife lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart." The statement caused an immediate sensation. Reconsidered, though, it may have been one of the Pope's more enlightened pronouncements on women and sex. John Paul had simply insisted that, in conjugal relations, a woman is the equal of a man—a subject, not an object, of sex. That is an attitude that has not flourished in the Church historically; nor does it today.

A misogynistic prejudice has pervaded the Church's moral thought down through the ages, based on the incident of Eve as the temptress in Genesis, and confirmed by the Stoic rhetoric in which the early Christian thinkers were trained. It reflected the Platonic conviction that man's proper activity was contempla-

tion. Churchmen from Tertullian and Cyprian in the third century to Jerome and John Chrysostom in the fifth delighted in denigrating womanhood as the source of the human race's downfall.

While attributing mankind's woes to the lubricious enticements of woman, preachers with awe-inspiring inconsistency harped upon a wife's rendering the conjugal debt contracted in marriage by giving her husband the sole use of her body. That the contract worked both ways was also on the books, but little attention was paid to this consideration because it was taken for granted that the sex act had been created for the man's convenience. Most women in the Christian tradition were taught that there was something distasteful about sex. They had to submit to their husband's advances with some regularity to keep peace in the household and beget children. Few Christian wives, even the educated ones, had any idea that, biologically, the sex act was made for the woman. Fewer still seem to have achieved the earthy wisdom of the Wyf of Bathe, who said:

In wyfhode i wil use myn instrument
As frely as my maker hath me it sent,
If i be dangerous, God give me sowre,
Myn housband shall have it at eve and at mowre
When that him lis com forth and pay his dette.

St. Paul's injunction "Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church" was interpreted in a mystical sense, divorced from any connection with conjugal affection and coital satisfaction. Despite the heavy use of sexual imagery throughout the Old Testament to

describe the relations between Yahweh and his chosen people, Christian exegetes avoided the Cantic of Canticles as mysteriously salacious, or interpreted it in such a fashion that it reinforced a propensity for sexual asceticism in conjugal relations. This puritanical tendency infected Christian thinking from the late second century until shortly before Vatican Council II (1962–1965). Traditional teaching on sexuality had been reduced in most preconconciliar moral textbooks to the inhuman prescription: “It is grievously sinful in the unmarried deliberately to procure or to accept even the mildest degree of true venereal pleasure; secondly, it is equally sinful to think, say or do anything with the intention of arousing even the smallest degree of this pleasure. . . .”

As late as 1944, Pius XII had said: “If the exclusive aim of nature or at least its primary intent had been the mutual giving and possessing of husband and wife in pleasure and delight; if nature had arranged that act only to make their personal experience joyous in the highest degree, and not as an incentive in the service of life; then the Creator would have made use of another plan in the formation of the marital act. . . .”

In direct opposition to that papal statement Vatican Council II declared: “[Conjugal] love is uniquely expressed and perfected within the marital act. The actions within marriage by which a couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner that is truly human these actions signify and promote the mutual giving by which the spouses enrich each other with a joyful and thankful will.”

With Pope John’s council, the Catholic Church had made a heroic effort to look realistically at the signs of the times. Turning its theological thinking upside down, the council decided to consult the facts of life before applying moral principles to the regulation of human conduct. It acknowledged love and mutual assistance as fundamental features of the marital union; and, while continuing the ban on sexual indulgence, it acknowledged the necessity of *responsible* parenthood. The council’s pastoral constitution described marriage as a “togetherness in love and life,” acknowledging that carnal affection was endowed by the Creator with “special gifts of healing, perfecting and exalting” the spouses in grace and charity.

Despite this achievement of fifteen years ago, a preconconciliar sexophobia seems to have resurfaced within the Church’s hierarchy. To be sure, the Polish Pontiff has frequently denied that a Manichaean streak of sexual embarrassment predominates in Vatican thinking,

and he has attempted in the course of weekly audiences over the past year to stress the personal rather than the procreative aspect of married love. Nevertheless, the result of the 1980 World Synod of Bishops on “The Role of the Christian Family in the World of Today” has been an attempt to restore the notion of procreation as the primary end of marriage to its preconconciliar dominance. At the same time, both Pope and synod ignored the pleas made by diocesan cardinals and prelates for a compassionate approach to the marital problems of their people. The synodal structure was dominated by intransigent Vatican functionaries still wedded to a pre-Copernican concept of the universe, and behind all lay the obsessive dread of hedonism—represented by sex—that still afflicts many Rome-oriented prelates and theologians.

As cardinals, bishops, theologians, and journalists descended on the Eternal City for the synod in late September, they were involved in a tradition that went back beyond the practice of the primitive Church to the administrative customs of the Roman Empire. A *synodos* was a meeting of roads where the civil and military governors of the colonial provinces gathered to discuss problems and policies in the light of the emperor’s instructions.

Almost immediately after achieving a relative catholicity, early Church leaders found it necessary to imitate imperial practices by holding local meetings of bishops to evaluate difficulties regarding doctrine and discipline. There is evidence of this practice during the latter half of the second century. Under Bishop Denis of Corinth, around 180 A.D., a series of synods was inaugurated to deal precisely with an alleviation of the Church’s rigorist attitude toward adultery and other marital problems.

The Oriental churches, particularly at Constantinople, established a so-called *synodos endemousa*, or permanent synod, imitated today in the sobornost of Russian and other Orthodox synodal assemblies. In these gatherings, the testimony of prelates, theologians, and lay experts regarding doctrinal and disciplinary problems is weighed in the light of tradition and of contemporary necessities under the guidance of the patriarch. Gradually a consensus is achieved and attributed to the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Only then can the patriarch make a pronouncement, which has to be in keeping with the mind of the synod.

Pope Paul VI sought to reintroduce this synodal machinery into the government of the Catholic Church immediately after Vatican Council II in compliance with the assembly’s call for collegiality—the rule of the Church at the top by the bishops with and under the Pope.

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The first of these triennial Roman synods was held in the fall of 1967. Its path was not smooth. Curial cardinals, particularly Alfredo Ottaviani and Michael Browne of the *ancien* Holy Office, sought to intimidate Pope and prelates with the charge that heresy was rife throughout the Church. But the bishops in attendance rejected this contention and achieved a substantial independence in their discussions and decisions. A permanent secretariat of elected noncurial prelates was established with headquarters in Rome to prepare for future synods.

The special synod of 1969—called to discuss the use and abuse of authority in the Church—achieved an explicit acknowledgment of the new orientation of Catholic theological thinking. The synod rejected *a priori* reasoning in the solution of pastoral problems; consideration was given instead to the *sensus fidelium* (“the mind of the faithful”) in the formulation of the Church’s teaching. This procedure was actually a return to the origins of Christian theology, in which the elements of the Church’s ethical teaching were adapted to the cultural practices of the local communities—Judaic, Greek, and Oriental—to constitute the Christian way of life. Thus a pluralism in its ethical thinking characterized the Christian Church from its beginnings. At Vatican Council II the Eastern churches played a decisive part in their witness to pluralistic solutions for doctrinal and disciplinary problems.

It was therefore taken for granted that Pope Paul wanted the synod to develop into a true sounding board for the Church’s universal self-awareness. Eventually, it was to be hoped, the assembly would grow into a sort of parliament. It would relieve the Holy Father of the present curial structure, which governs the Church through countless directives regarding the sacraments, clerical conduct, education and marriage, and so forth, to which the Pope lends his authority.

A comparative freedom of discussion was exercised by the bishops at the 1969 synod. However, with the synod of 1971, which concentrated principally on the problems of the priesthood, curial control suddenly reasserted itself. Debate on the request for optional celibacy in the Western Church was curtailed and the synodal conclusions were dictated by “higher authority” within the papal household. The curia employed similar though less obvious tactics in the synods of 1974 and 1977, which discussed, respectively, evangelization and catechesis, or Christian formation.

A political truth quickly surfaced in the postconciliar period. When Rome consulted the diocesan bishops individually, the Vatican authorities usually obtained answers in keeping with their desires. But when these prelates were assembled in a council or a synod, they achieved the courage to speak their minds. In dealing

with this phenomenon, curial officials had learned to allow a free discussion of synodal issues during the general sessions and only gradually to exercise a refined guidance in the inner group discussions. By reserving the publication of the synod’s decisions to the Pope, they had full control over its results.

Immediate preparations for the synod of 1980 had been auspicious. Clerical conferences in most nations had entered into discussions with their priests and people to discover the mind of the faithful on the issues involved. A Roman consultation of individual bishops as well as of episcopal groups resulted in a Vatican working paper that was to be used not as an agenda but as a guideline to keep the synodal discussions within the limits of family life.

The document met with heavy criticism, most severely from Africa, where Pope John Paul had spoken frequently on the ideals of Christian marriage during his ten-day visit to Central Africa in May 1980. A pastoral consultation in the diocese of Arusha in Tanzania called the Vatican paper “flawed,” saying it gave its attention exclusively to the European concept of monogamous marriage and the nuclear family. This marital structure did not represent the reality of the universal Church, particularly in Africa and in the Orient, where the extended family, with its tribal and blood relationships, still prevailed.

The laity in other sectors of the Church, in pastoral consultations, had also criticized the document. They faulted its failure to confront married love, divorce, the sexual revolution, homosexuality, and the population problem in a realistic fashion. They felt that the Roman document repeated pious platitudes about the sanctity of marriage and that, while dodging the reality of the population explosion, it insisted on the virtues of “natural methods” of family planning as a type of conjugal asceticism. What bothered many commentators was the ease with which these clerical experts, with no experience of the pains of childbirth, the incessant worries and tragedies of rearing teenagers, and the thousand and one difficulties of conjugal cohabitation, spoke so glibly of the Cross as part of a family’s Christian witness.

Aware of the potential explosions they faced, the Pope and his principal advisers had no intention of allowing the synodal prelates to wander far from the strict, legalistic Roman line in regard to the areas of marital concern currently disturbing the Church. In the immediate preparations, however, Vatican authorities stressed the collegial character of the gathering. John Paul maintained that he had called the synod into being to give him authentic information on marriage and family life throughout the Church, which informa-

tion he could then evaluate in keeping with his prerogatives as the Church's supreme pastor.

More than 200 bishops, cardinals, and prelates were involved in the synod, as well as twelve superior generals of male religious orders, one of whom—Father Gabriele Ferrari of the Society of St. Francis Xavier—spoke for, as he said, a million nuns who, though voiceless, form the backbone of the Church's evangelistic efforts. The Pope appointed some twenty members, including Cardinals Terence Cooke of New York and Joseph Ratzinger of Munich, and the gathering was completed by the cardinals and prelates who preside over the principal Vatican offices.

Curial strategy ensured that the forty-three observers—including five doctors and sixteen married couples, some with infants in arms—were hand-picked by a special Vatican Committee on Family Life. They gave witness to the authenticity of the so-called Billings method of natural birth control. (Many of the prelates considered this entrance of the Church's higher authority into such a delicate matter as a means of birth prevention requiring vaginal temperatures and mucus observations unworthy of the Holy See's tradition of nobility of principle.)

Meanwhile, the Pope had inaugurated a series of Wednesday talks dealing with "the nuptial meaning of the body." While he discussed the intimacies of conjugal love, nudity, and shame from a personalist viewpoint, he insisted on the teachings of *Humanae Vitae* (Pope Paul VI's disputed encyclical "On Human Life"), which condemned artificial contraceptives, as incontestably binding. But he was careful to make no direct reference to the synodal discussions. And in his frequent appearance at the general sessions of the synod, he kept his own counsel, greeting the members graciously, granting individual audiences, and inviting as many as possible to dine with him.

The Pope's opening talk on Friday, September 28, gave some hope that full freedom of discussion would prevail. For the actual inauguration of the synod, he selected as relator, or whip, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Munich, the comparatively youthful opponent of the controversial theologian Hans Küng. Ratzinger presented a summary of the views forwarded to Rome by the conferences of bishops. Doctrinally speaking, he said, the majority of the bishops were satisfied with the Church's teaching on the family; hence the synod should speak out prophetically against the ideologies and abuses alienating men and women today. Of the topics that would certainly come to the fore, he mentioned the role of women in the Church, the institutional and public character of marriage as a Christian witness, the dangers from consumerism as well as extreme poverty, and the need for a profound restatement of the truths contained in *Humanae Vitae*. It



**Archbishop Joseph
Bernardin of Cincinnati:**
Consider the body as an
expression of dignity.

was clear from the start that Cardinal Ratzinger had not touched the central concerns of his audience.

The actual discussions were begun by Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati, who called for a positive theology of human sexuality that would enable the Church to convince people of the validity of its tenets. Such an approach, he said, would consider the body not only in relation to the physically identifiable purposes of its parts but also as an expression of the dignity entrusted to the man and woman who were to function with the twofold purpose of dispelling each other's existential loneliness and cooperating with the Creator in the injunction to "increase and multiply." By enlarging its concept of man's sexual relationships, the Church could disabuse people of the notion that it had nothing but prohibitions to offer in the field of morality.

Others sounded similar themes. Bishop Lawrence Samanchit of Thailand pleaded with the speakers to get down to the solid facts of family life. "We are afraid," he said, "that otherwise the outcome of the synod will be a mere repetition of ideals and principles with which everyone is familiar." And the energetic Cardinal Vincente Enrique y Tarancón of Madrid, outspoken critic of the Franco regime, insisted that the complex of problems confronting the Christian family today could not be faced without a fresh output of energy and imagination. In practice, he said, this



Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco: More than 70 percent of churchgoing Catholic women of childbearing age use artificial contraceptives, and fewer than 30 percent of U.S. Catholic priests consider this practice sinful.

required listening to the laity who live in families. The synod must pay attention to developments in social, economic, and other aspects of modern life that have given new shape to old questions.

The assembly suddenly snapped to attention with the unexpected speech of Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco, outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. A former Vatican official who had served as bishop of Oklahoma before assuming leadership of the West Coast bastion of Catholicism, Quinn addressed himself directly to the subject of contraception. Denying categorically that he was attacking the doctrine of *Humanae Vitae*, he nevertheless faced the fact that this teaching was contested by priests and people whose faith, practice of their religion, and good will simply could not be called into question.

He pointed out that Pope Paul's hope that "people of good will" would see the validity of his teaching had not been fulfilled: more than 70 percent of churchgoing Catholic women of childbearing age were using artificial contraceptives, and fewer than 30 percent of U.S. Catholic priests considered this practice sinful.

The archbishop drew a practical conclusion: the credibility of the magisterium, or teaching office of the Church, was challenged by an ever-widening circle of the faithful. And while the Holy See claimed to have a demographic policy regarding responsible parenthood, it was not coming to grips with the fact that 350,000 babies were being born each day while only 200,000 people were dying. Besides, by the year 2000 another billion people would be added to already severely overcrowded cities with their enormous slum areas and millions of abandoned children. Thus, increasingly, conscientious couples were becoming convinced that they had no right to beget large families, either because of their own straitened economic or psychological situations, or because of the precarious state of world population, a factor considered in the Vatican Council's constitution dealing with responsible parenthood. Nor could these people be dismissed as selfish or hedonistically oriented, as Church officials frequently labeled them.

To resolve the impasse between official teaching and widespread dissent, Quinn proposed that greater attention be paid to the Church's teaching on the transmission of life. He suggested that certain nuances and clarifications could amount to a development of the doctrine. He recalled instances of such evolution at Vatican Council II in the understanding of sacred scripture and the new attitude of the Church toward human rights. But he did not venture a guess as to where such development might lead in regard to the crucial sentence "Every conjugal act must be open to the transmission of life."

This speech electrified the synodal hall; being the first piece of truly hard news coming from that assembly, it was treated in the press as a challenge to the Church's official teaching by the American episcopate. Repudiating this interpretation in a press statement the following day, Quinn reiterated the fact that he had nevertheless offered proposals to the synod for dealing with the personal and demographic problems of the modern world, which had to be recognized if the Church was to retain its credibility.

Quinn's call for an honest confrontation of the world's demographic situation was echoed by several speakers from different sectors of the globe. Bishop Patrick Iteka of Tanzania said that while Africans have traditionally regarded large families as a blessing, the socioeconomic situation had turned parenthood today into a burden. Hence, if the quality of life was to be improved, families would have to be planned. Bishop Sudartanto Hadisumatra of Indonesia said the Church should be offering practical help not only on how to reduce the number of births but on how

to bring out the full meaning of human fertility before discussing the theological aspects of birth control.

Archbishop Angelo Fernandes of New Delhi made a strong plea for the millions of families who, because of destitution and ignorance, have no hope of achieving the dignity of a true marriage and whose ability to exercise responsible parenthood is nil. He asked the synod for a pastoral statement concerning contraception that would keep in mind the plight of his people.

The question posed earlier by Bishop Alberto Tobar of Quito, Ecuador, was how could such marginal families, in their ignorance, economic misery, and irregular marital unions, be expected to form the "domestic Church" being exalted by so many speakers? While living totally outside the sacramental life for lack of priests, how could they be "instruments of evangelization" in keeping with papal ideals? Most priests and bishops involved with these areas had simply turned their backs on this impossible situation.

It was the bishop of Beauvais, Jacques Jullien, speaking for the French hierarchy, who attempted to bring a truly theological element into the debate. He said that as the essentials of life and love are of the heart and spirit, the quality of a couple's Christian commitment could not be gauged in terms of their contraceptive means. After consultation with some 60,000 French Catholics, he said, the episcopal conference was convinced that "techniques of [ovulation] observation" were not practical for large sections of the faithful. These families must be aided by the synod so that they could live without constant anxiety occasioned by the rigidity of Church teaching.

The cardinal of England, George Basil Hume, tall, affable, a former Benedictine abbot and a sports addict, said that in the synodal working paper, stress was laid on the "prophetic mission" of the family based on the experience of husband and wife in their understanding of marriage. The cardinal suggested that the mind of the faithful, as expressed in many pastoral consultations around the world, must be considered as a *fons theologica*, or "source of doctrinal awareness," to which the Church's pastors had to pay attention. Then, confronting the problem of contraception directly, he said the well-being of the Church was suffering from the controversy over birth control. While some couples discovered new richness in their married life through the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, others simply could not accept the prohibition of artificial methods and found so-called natural means intolerable. Nor could it be said that these people had failed to overcome their human frailty and sinfulness. The problem was more complex.

Support for the Vatican position came from some unexpected quarters. A number of Third World pre-



**Cardinal George Basil Hume
of England:** Heed the mind of
the faithful.

ates shared the view of Bishop Dennis de Jong of Zambia, who blamed the difficulties affecting marriage and family morality on the social and economic injustice induced by both capitalist and communist systems. These evil policies resulted in enormously widespread starvation, infant mortality, the separation of workers from their families, and the degraded living and working conditions of a third of mankind. Such factors, he said, were worsened by the campaigns of governments and voluntary institutions in industrialized nations that made birth control programs a necessary condition of economic aid.

His accusation was echoed by Bishop François-Wolff Ligondé of Haiti and, surprisingly, by Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro of Pakistan and the tall, stately Cardinal Juan Landazuri Ricketts of Lima. The latter challenged the data of the Club of Rome on population statistics and the more recent Brandt report on population overage. He complained of organizations and governments that, under pressure from such sources as U.S. AID and International Planned Parenthood, were forcing people to restrict the number of their children drastically, threatening or imposing abortion or sterilization on uncooperative citizens. Despite numerous disclaimers by U.S. AID authorities, this accusation was a theme in many speeches. Deploring the anguish of heart and conscience such violations of human rights induced, these same Church officials seemed unconscious of the anxiety and deprivation through which they put their faithful by the intransigence of their anti-contraceptive position.

To the consternation of many observers, several



Cardinal Pericle Felici of Rome: Law, not compassion, must be the criterion of the Church's moral code.

Indian bishops, including Henry D'Souza, president of the Conference of Indian Bishops, praised the generosity of parents who brought large families into the world as if they did not have evidence, on every street corner of their large cities, of people dying of starvation. Critics likewise looked with cynicism on the Vatican's lauding of the success of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, one of the official synodal observers, in spreading natural family planning methods among the poor and abject. While she is doubtless one of the world's most dedicated apostles to the destitute, her experience, though an inspiration, can hardly be used as proof that natural family planning is the answer to the world's demographic ills.

In a speech as frank and unexpected as that of the American Archbishop Quinn, Derek Worlock, the usually reserved archbishop of Liverpool, startled the assembly on the topic of the Church's dealings with the divorced and remarried. Commenting on the desire of men and women for a more satisfying fulfillment within their conjugal relationships, on the availability of means to control marital fertility, and on the new role of women, Worlock said that it was all too easy to dismiss these factors as materialism and hedonism. Despite the best efforts of the faithful and their pastors, he said, some marriages fail and the family unity is destroyed. For these victims of misfortune, and not necessarily of personal sin, the Church must have a healing ministry of consolation. Then getting down to

the heart of the matter, he described the suffering of literally millions of Catholics who are living in a second, stabilized Christian marriage and feel an agonizing need for the sacraments. "Is their spirit of repentance and desire for sacramental strength to be forever frustrated?" he asked. "Can they only be told they must reject their new responsibilities as a necessary condition of restoration to sacramental life?"

To these pleas, the curial bloc, led by the Church's chief legist, the rotund Cardinal Pericle Felici of the Segnatura (the equivalent of the Church's supreme court), turned a deaf ear, with the observation that the law and not compassion was the criterion of the Church's moral code. Dermot Ryan, archbishop of Dublin, said in echo: "In expressing sympathy with those who experience difficulty in their married life, the synod cannot substitute compassion for moral principles." It was a most unfortunate observation coming from a biblical scholar acquainted with Christ's dealing with the adulteress and other sinners throughout the New Testament.

Fortunately, truly Christian sentiments were upheld by the master general of the Dominican Order, Most Rev. Vincent de Couesnongle, who reminded the gathering that "too many Catholics believe they are condemned by the Church because it is difficult for them to follow the teachings about sexuality." God's design is a design of love, he insisted. "This is the fundamental law of the gospel. We must return to it without fail in all things. For it is on love that we will be judged."

For the Rome-trained prelates and theologians, arguments pointing to the disregard of the Church's teaching in matters of birth control and of the divorced and remarried by literally millions of churchgoing Catholics had no significance. Statistics, they said, do not make morality.

There was a sophism involved here. From the start, the Church had observed the principle of *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*: "What is believed everywhere, at all times, and by all." While great developments in doctrine had occurred through the ages, this rule remained an essential factor in the living out of the gospel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was precisely at this point that the conciliar and the Roman curial theologies clashed. In opposing the notion of collegial rule of the Church by the bishops with and under the Pope, Vatican officials claimed it was the magisterium that determined authentic doctrine. Conciliar theologians insisted that the Church's faith was preserved equally in the belief of the faithful. Hence they felt that, in structuring the results of the synod along curial lines, the Holy See was being unfaithful to a primary rule of faith.

One topic—the only realistic solution to the

Church's dilemma in regard to illicit second marriages—was not openly discussed. It was the fact that, by the thousands, priests in the confessional were helping people to arrive in their consciences at solutions to their irregular marital states by decisions based on their sincere conviction of the invalidity of their first marriages. This strategem, known surreptitiously in the *ancien* Holy Office as “the Häring solution” (from the Redemptorist Rev. Bernard Häring, who became its champion over a decade ago), is a matter of tremendous annoyance to the Congregations for Doctrine and the Sacraments, for it is a revolutionary approach to the problems of the divorced and remarried. What Rome continues to demand in this matter is that each broken marital situation be examined by an ecclesiastical tribunal for judgment regarding the marriage's validity. This is an obvious impossibility in view of the multitude of cases, their costs, the intricacies of the legal requirements, and the comparatively small number of such Church tribunals.

Following achievement by Vatican Council II of the description of marriage as a permanent covenant of love resulting in an intimate union of persons and their actions, many pastors and theologians have concluded that where love never really existed, or actually died, the marriage covenant ceased to exist. This is particularly the case in a marriage where implacable hatred has replaced love, thus destroying both the couple and their children—not a rare phenomenon.

Roman legalism rejects this notion. Instead, Church courts hand down declarations of nullity, asserting that, for legal or psychological reasons, no marriage ever existed, despite the length of time a couple has spent together or the number of children they may have produced. In the eyes of many, this mechanism is a grave insult to the couple, reducing the idea of Christian marriage to a travesty. Today's moral theologian prefers an existential approach to the dissolution of irrevocably broken marriages. He applies the formula “Until death do us part” to the love covenant in the same manner as it is applied to physical dissolution.

Likewise of considerable concern to a large number of prelates was Roman teaching regarding “mixed” marriages between Catholics and partners of other religions or of none. The reserved, stoical cardinal of the Netherlands, Jan Willebrands, former prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity, suggested that in view of the progress made in mutual appreciation of each other's theological traditions, among Christians at least, the old stringent rules of Catholic predominance should be greatly modified. He felt that couples who were striving to achieve a truly Christian family life should be encouraged to participate in each other's liturgical and sacramental lives.

His plea was repeated widely, particularly by Bishop



Most Rev. Vincent de Couesnongle, Dominican:
 “Too many Catholics believe they are condemned by the Church... it is on love that we will be judged.”

John Gran of Oslo and Bishop Paul Yasuda of Osaka. Both these prelates, with their microscopic groups of Catholics in vast Protestant and pagan areas, asked for a more benevolent attitude on Rome's part. By allowing the local bishops to set their own rules for such marriages, the Church would become more acceptable and would allow the Catholic party to give authentic witness to the reality of his or her faith.

What struck the observers watching these churchmen assemble in the Vatican each day was the truly international character of the gathering. In the biblical perspective, they were “devout men from every nation under the sun.” And, like the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem for what is considered the first Church council, in 51 A.D., they represented widely differing viewpoints. This fact became immediately evident as speaker after speaker addressed the gathering in eight-minute interventions, giving witness to the particular needs or customs of his people.

As the synodal debate progressed, a considerable proportion of African prelates played an important part, putting the Church's true catholicity to the test. Many African bishops demanded a thorough revision of the Christian marriage rite, in keeping with that



Cardinal Jan Willebrands of the Netherlands:

Mixed-marriage couples should be encouraged to participate in each other's liturgical and sacramental lives.

continent's tribal customs. Grave damage had been done to the African Church by the original missionaries, who, lacking any sense of the cultural and anthropological situations with which they were dealing, ruthlessly condemned pagan customs as idolatry. Nevertheless, Christianity took hold in most of these lands; Africa now has ten black cardinals and the vast majority of its bishops are natives.

The first black cardinal, Laurian Rugambwa of Tanzania, said that churches in Africa felt they had the right to ensure that marriage and family life within their regions were authentically Christian and authentically African. In finding solutions on the pastoral level to problems arising from the clash of Christianity and African cultures, the bishops' conference should supply guidelines. The difficulties to be encountered in such adaptations came to the fore as cardinals and bishops from the emerging nations spoke out frankly.

Archbishop Gabriel Wako of Khartoum maintained that the Church's current marital rite is extraneous to people's lives. Instead of being encased in tribal customs and family traditions, the ritual is centered on the priest, even though Catholic doctrine teaches that the couple administer the sacrament to each other. Under the present law, he pointed out, distances and shortages of priests have reduced the number of recorded, canonical marriages in most Sudanese dioceses to one

or two a year, an obviously ridiculous situation. In reorganizing the rite, the roles of the community, the extended family, and the elders must receive greater emphasis.

Bishop Andre Kaseba of Zaire described the process of tribal marriage, a ritual first celebrated in the residence of the parents of the chosen woman, then at the homes of her maternal uncles, then in the family of the young man, thus gradually introducing the couple to a mature realization of what is being achieved. This process makes for a dynamic marital experience and renders such notions as prenuptial and trial marriages impertinent. A truly pastoral adaptation would include the presence of the Church at each stage of this process.

The courage of these African prelates in discussing their difficulties has to be seen against the background of Pope Paul VI's call for the Africanization of their churches in his visit to Kampala in 1969, and of Pope John Paul's visit to Central Africa last May, when he insisted on the sanctity of the monogamous marriage, based, in the European fashion, on romantic love and the nuclear family. John Paul had likewise stressed the ideal of priestly celibacy as a model for the fidelity to their calling that should motivate a married couple. The Africans were knowingly defying the papal viewpoint.

While it was recognized that polygamy is a dying institution owing to economic and social pressures, conscientious pastors felt that the polygamous family should be welcomed into the sacramental life of the Church on the principle of gradualism. They should be thought of as occupying an intermediate state between the ancient Hebraic patriarchal family of Abraham and the new law of Christ, but in need of the grace of the sacraments. In particular, the demand of Rome that the polygamous man give up all his wives but one involved injustice to all concerned.

Once again, suggestions for a revision of the Church's family teaching were held in check by Cardinal Felici's final, long, and intricate plea for the predominance of law in all the Church's conjugal considerations. Citing the enormous increase in annulment cases being handled by ecclesiastical tribunals around the world (he quoted a 5000 percent increase, which comes nowhere near the reality), he said he was concerned less with the numbers than with the levity with which many of these tribunals were dealing with such sacred matters. Insisting that, for the good of society, the Church adhere to the *favor juris* (the presumption that the validity of a disputed marriage enjoys the favor of the law until proven otherwise), he urged the jurists to expedite cases but to follow canonical procedures faithfully. When questioned about the impending publication of the new marriage legislation in the

revised Code of Canon Law, he said that the text was in the hands of the bishops, and a final decision on its promulgation was up to the Holy Father. It was on that note that the finale of the two-week discussion was reached.

The synod dispersed into various language groups—three English, three Spanish, two French, one German, one Italian, and one Latin, indicating the Church's geophonic extension. In these small meetings, vigorous attempts were made to argue out the problems presented during the first two weeks. Nevertheless, the pall of *Humanae Vitae* hung over each of these assemblies. They found themselves forced to proclaim a loyal adherence to its teaching as a "prophetic document." While reluctant prelates were allowed to opt for an *aprofondimento*, or "deepening of the doctrine," it became quite clear that this consideration in no way included a revision of the teaching.

It was the Latin-language circle, composed mainly of curial cardinals (Seper, Oddi, Felici, Palazzini, and several prelates from behind the Iron Curtain), that betrayed the convolutions of the curial mind and presumably Pope John Paul's own thinking. Beginning with a statement that the "doctrinal method should prevail," Cardinal Palazzini, as spokesman, derided the idea that pastoral practices could be justified if they were not in keeping with the authentic doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. As marriage was a sacrament instituted directly by Christ, he said, it was an irreversible covenant created by the mutual consent of the contracting parties.

He made the astounding statement that although Vatican Council II had not used the term "principal and secondary ends" of marriage, that term had been implicitly retained in its teaching. As a consequence, traditional Church doctrine that procreation is the primary end of marriage had to be upheld in keeping with the constant mind of the magisterium.

Considering the conciliar battle to eliminate this clause from the Church's definition of marriage, which had been fought during the fourth session of the council and had involved Pope Paul personally, Palazzini's statement was a bold-faced prevarication and a warning of the course of things to come. The council's determination to do away with the idea of procreation as the primary purpose of matrimony had been aimed at restoring the early Church's sacramental conception of marriage as a bond of love, a fact even Palazzini could not ignore as he deplored the placing of love in the marriage covenant on the same level as consent. The latter, looked upon as an indissoluble contract, was the principal concern of the jurists. Palazzini condemned



**Cardinal Laurian Rugambwa
of Tanzania:** Marriage and
family life should be
authentically Christian and
authentically African.

any deviation from the tenets of *Humanae Vitae* with the apodictic observation that sexuality has as its goal the transmission of life. The duty of pastors and theologians, he concluded, was not to correct or diminish divine law, of which the cardinal and his colleagues in the Vatican were the custodians, but with maximum charity to help the faithful to observe it.

At the close of the language-group meetings some twenty prelates delivered speeches, most of them cut to the curial cloth. Shockingly, three interventions were eliminated from the official transcript.

Archbishop Dennis Hurley, an exceptionally well trained scholastic theologian from Durban, South Africa, spoke challengingly on contraception: "Certain fathers represent countries where there is a problem, the problem of making the teaching against contraception convincing, especially in circumstances of real hardship. Couples who have done their duty to God, to one another, and to life find it extremely difficult to accept that if they yield to anxiety and make use of artificial means of birth control, they are guilty of an objectively grave sin.

"It is not easy to explain to them that the act of artificially limiting the exercise of one faculty of life is intrinsically evil, while the act of exterminating life itself is not. For in certain circumstances, a person may kill, as in self-defense or in a so-called just war."

His remarks never appeared in the press synopsis of the meeting. In the minds of the Roman authorities,



Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger of Munich: The majority of the bishops are satisfied with the Church's teaching on the family.

the analogy Archbishop Hurley chose was the great offender. He touched exactly the weak point in the papal teaching on birth control. Not only is the ban on contraceptives biologically questionable, but the Church's tolerance of killing a human being in a war or police action ultimately calls into question the logic of its intolerance of abortion.

Concluding this phase of the synod, Cardinal Ratzinger blandly essayed a summary of the principal points of the debate, indicating that a significant consensus had been achieved on all the major issues. This was hardly in keeping with the facts.

When he opened Vatican Council II, Pope John XXIII said: "Frequently in the past the Church has condemned error with the greatest severity. Nowadays, however, the Church of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy."

In this context, the sermon with which Pope John Paul closed the bishops' synod came as a shock. For in that address, the Pontiff signaled his intention to dismiss the achievement of a majority of the Church's theologians in their attempt to update Catholic moral thinking in keeping with the prescriptions of the council. He ignored the pleas of responsible prelates for greater institutional compassion for impossible marital situations. Choosing to repeat traditional legalistic for-

mulas, the Pontiff refused to allow divorced and remarried Catholics to participate in the Eucharist—Christianity's central sacrament—but nevertheless demanded that they live in accord with Catholic teachings.

In so doing, John Paul recreated an excruciating anxiety of conscience for millions of Catholics who, after a disastrous first marital experience, were trying to stabilize their own lives and those of their children while remaining within the Church. The issues of marital policy and the papal reaffirmation of the Church's ban on artificial contraception are not simply intramural Catholic affairs. In most developed countries, Roman Catholics constitute large and influential communities, repositories of human ethics in an increasingly inhumane world. That the Pope chose to ignore statistics pointing to a 2.6 billion population increase by the year 2000 A.D. hardly seems in keeping with the Church's claim to exercise a catholic care for all the world.

Behind the Roman intransigence is apparently a return to the concept of the Pope as an omniscient Christian witness that characterized the last two preconciliar pontiffs, Pius XI and Pius XII. This conviction rests on the presumption that religion is primarily a deposit of divine truth to be believed and practiced in a specifically Roman fashion, rather than an experience based on faith and the imitation of Christ as a person who called himself "The Way, the Truth, and the Life."

The cerebral concept of Catholicism—propagated increasingly since the declaration of papal infallibility in 1870 and exercised in the dictates of the *ancien* Holy Office on every possible issue from communism to ectopic gestation and organ transplants—had prompted the condemnation of curial "triumphalism" in a highly emotional session of Vatican Council II. The result was a view of the hierarchy as a service to the people of God rather than a domination. After the council, however, this achievement was repudiated by Vatican-based prelates. Their demand that Pope Paul VI reverse many of the conciliar decisions kept that conscientious Pontiff's reign in turmoil.

In his summation of synodal accomplishments, John Paul insisted that a unanimity had been achieved in which prelates with pastoral care of married couples rejected any dichotomy between instruction and doctrine. It is not, he said, a matter of keeping the law as a mere "ideal" to be obeyed in the future. It is a question of the command of Christ that difficulties should constantly be overcome: the "law of gradualness" is not possible unless a person obeys the divine law.

With this injunction, the Holy Father seemed intent on destroying a line of Catholic moral development that began with the early churchmen who looked upon

Christ as the pedagogue gradually coaxing sinners onto the path of holiness. He seemed to be turning away from the final section of *Humanae Vitae*, in which Paul VI gave great encouragement to those who could not immediately achieve the ideal of the encyclical. Paul had counseled the merciful use of the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist as a remedy for frailty.

John Paul also seemed to repudiate the advice given their faithful by many episcopates, particularly the French and the Italian, who had originally interpreted the encyclical precisely as an ideal, assuring their people that while they strove to live up to its demands, they should not consider themselves in grave sin if they failed.

Paying no attention to the witness of the other Christian communions, the Pontiff called for an adherence to absolute truth in these matters, as if the history of the Church's theology and doctrinal disputes had no bearing on the achievement of that precious gift. Then, in his final admonition, instead of the love covenant as the basis for family life in Christ, John Paul spoke of the need to "do charity" in truth as the apex of the Catholic involvement in marriage.

In his zeal to unify the Church's moral teaching, John Paul went beyond the traditional understanding of the papal role by proclaiming a set of ideals representing one particular theological school. He seems to have ignored an age-old conviction that the Church has never taught indisputably in the area of concrete moral situations. As Thomas Aquinas testified, the two absolutes of divine law are "Do good" and "Avoid evil." The moment an attempt is made to define good or evil in concrete situations, difficulty arises. Karl Rahner, probably the most competent Catholic theologian of this century, confirms this wisdom: "Apart from wholly universal norms—your conduct must be just; do not kill—there are hardly any particular rules of Christian morality that can be proclaimed by Church authorities as unequivocally true."

From time immemorial, theologians have defended moral positions contrary to the official teaching of the Roman magisterium. In dealing with penitents, confessors must allow them to follow the opinions of reputable moralists in keeping with Rome's own response to appeals for clarification of its teaching: "Consult approved authors." There is thus no reason that current problems of conscience concerned with birth control or the perplexities of the divorced and remarried cannot be solved by confessors and theologians on the same principles.

While the Pope remains the Church's supreme teacher, the ideals he enunciates cannot always be carried out. Following a long tradition, emphasized in particular by the man recognized as the "Prince of Moral Theologians," St. Alphonsus Liguori, individual



Pope John Paul II: The teachings of *Humanae Vitae*, which condemned artificial contraceptives, are incontestably binding.

consciences—even if not fully in keeping with papal prescriptions—are to be followed, particularly when they have been formed with the aid of prudent and merciful confessors.

By a peculiar transformation, Karol Wojtyla as John Paul II seems to have forgotten the realistic teaching he championed in his book *The Acting Person*, written while he was still a cardinal and a philosopher. There he described three features of an authentic Christian community faced with the problems of the hour as "solidarity, opposition, and dialogue." Defining solidarity as the attitude of a community in which the common good initiates and conditions the participation of the members, he saw opposition as a function of this communion. "The one who voices his opposition to the general or particular rules of the community does not thereby reject its membership. Instead, he contributes to its growth."

In a final judgment on synodal accomplishments, theologians and critics could take consolation in the fact that while the official results were cut to the Roman cloth, the earlier witness of the synodal delegates, representing the *oikumene*, or truly catholic community, had expressed authentic opposition to Roman dictation vis-à-vis marriage and family life. Out of this dispute within the Catholic communion may yet be born a new dialogue involving all Christian churches as well as the *Katholike*, or the whole wide world. □

A TRIP TO THE SEASIDE

A story by
V.S. Pritchett

After she had dropped her sister off at the hotel, Sarah drove *Mr. Andrews* (as she pointedly called him) along the seafront to the station. They were stiffened by silence. He got out and said coldly, "Thank you. Goodbye," but she got out too and said, "Oh no. I'm coming onto the platform to see you onto the train." He looked at his watch: for seven minutes he would have to put up with her. She even stood close to him; until the London train came she was not going to leave him. Even when, to escape, he excused himself and went to the door marked *Gentlemen*, she marched with him and stood outside, vigilant. When he came out and the train arrived at last, she almost pushed him into the nearest compartment and would have closed the door but other passengers were crowding after him. Still she did not move and at the open door she started muttering short sentences. She said, "We don't want you down here messing up her life again" and "Trading on her feelings."

Andrews did not speak. He sat in his corner seat, his face as pink as Aberdeen granite, looking straight ahead of him, ignoring her, his chin raised, his nose on its dignity. She was a short and avid woman with dry gray hair and about his age. Just before the door was closed by a porter and the train gave a starting jolt she shouted, "I hope we never set eyes on you again."

Some passengers raised their newspapers after a glance at him. Others stared. In the first five minutes as the train picked up speed he sat without changing his expression. Then he got up and left the compartment with a look of contempt for everyone there and, checking his ticket, made for an empty compartment in the first-class coach. There he was alone, looking blankly at the villas, trees, and fields wheeling back in the watery spring dusk.

That morning Andrews had arrived from London just to spend the day, even possibly a week if things went well. You could never tell. Anyway, there would be a sniff of sea air to clean his kippered London lungs. He thought of fish as he walked from the station; had lunch at a hotel called *The George*, which seemed to be the best place; fancied oysters, a Dover sole, a glass of white wine, which brought out that pink in his face. Then, better dressed than the Easter crowd, he went for an inspecting stroll. He was a widower of sixty who had spent his business life in the carpet trade. It had struck him as a good omen and a compliment to his gifts as a salesman that the lounge of the hotel had a new chocolate-colored carpet with a design of huge chrysanthemums on it—one of his "lines," the *Demeter Floral*. It wore well. He had indeed the muted walk of a man for whom the streets were carpeted and the



smile of a public benefactor with a quiet surprise in his pocket: he was looking for a wife. He looked at one or two houses that were for sale, for that he also wanted: a house by the sea. The prices were very high; that dream had to go. He turned off to the address of Miss Louisa Browder, who had been his secretary for years before his job had come to a sudden end. As he came up in the train he had thought of her as a possibility, if also *faute de mieux*.

To call on Louisa Browder would require nerve, for she had walked out of his office after a row five years before, but he was not a man to entangle himself in the rights and wrongs of the past. He knew the trouble had started at a trade exhibition in Brighton—a much larger resort than this—and he put it down to her age, or perhaps her mother's death, those family things like the bother with her jealous sister who had never liked him—things that upset women and make them take it out on others, just as his wife, Daisy, used to do. In *her* jealous way—jealousy her only fault—she would shout, "Louisa's a woman and don't you forget it." Yet she had often stayed for weekends at their house, almost a friend of the family. He was shocked that she had not sent him a letter of condolence when his wife died. He sent her the newspaper notice of Daisy's death and, as a rebuke, no comment of his own. There

was no answer for a long time and then a short letter did come, signed formally "Louisa Browder," saying she was sorry to read the sad news and that Daisy had been a "loyal wife and a wonderful mother to your children." The curt note could, of course, be called a riposte if you liked to take it that way, but what struck him most was the cause of the delay in her reply. She had moved out of London. She had gone to live in this town in a house by the sea. The address transformed her: a new life in a pretty house with a sea view; he repeated this like the words of a song these days.

Andrews had not told Louisa he was coming: in dealing with women, surprise was essential. He passed the sedate terrace houses of the seafront and was disappointed to find himself in a side street and standing at the door of a mean little villa, with no sea view and with the degrading word *Vacancies* on a card in the window. She had gone downhill. There was an old white car in the garage at the side of the place. The thumping and miauling of canned music was coming out of the front room as he pushed the doorbell. There was no answer. He rang again. When the door was opened the music rushed out, swamping his voice, which he had to raise when he

spoke to a gingery young man with a book in his hand. His long hair seemed to be dancing to the tune.

"Come along in," the young man said, and, bawling up the stairs, "Sally, an old gent for you," went back to the front room. Andrews winced at the sight of linoleum on the floor of the hall. The house was cold and smelled of polish. Sarah, not Louisa, came to the top of the stairs and called out, "We're full up," but came down, rubbing her hands together, half cringing, half ready for battle. The whole Browder family, even Louisa, Andrews remembered, had always cringed. She said again, "I said we're full up." And she shut the sitting-room door before she looked at him. Then she stepped back.

"Mr. Andrews!" she said, and seemed to swallow a huge lump of unbelief and suspicion. "What do you want?"

Still a public benefactor, but now hard-eyed, Andrews said, "I was hoping to see Louisa—I happened to be here on business and I thought I'd drop in for a moment."

"She's gone out," said the sister, studying him. "What do you want to see her about, if I may ask? Is she expecting you?"

"No," he said. "Just a little surprise. When will she be in? She wrote to me so kindly when Daisy died—my wife, you know."

"I know," said the sister briskly. "She showed me the letter."

"I didn't know that she had moved down here," he said.

"I suppose she can move if she wants to," said the sister.

"A nice little town. Really," he said boldly, "I've been looking around for a place for myself. You look well, Sarah." She did not; she looked scrawny and yellow.

"A place here?" Sarah said. "I told you we are full." Now she looked frightened. She studied him from his nose to the tips of his shoes. "You mean you're looking for a house here?" She hesitated. At that moment the telephone rang on the hall table. "Come into the dining room," she said.

She pushed him into a room and said, "Stay there." The room had a French window looking onto a cold little garden. The spring plants, he saw, were late this year, held back by the east wind.

He heard her answering the call; then he heard footsteps in the room above and a rush down the stairs and Louisa's voice.

"Still a liar," said Andrews.

The room was small. The furniture was of the kind that is bought at a discount. There was a polished oak table with a dispirited runner on it, chairs that stood at the table like orphans, a sideboard with a bottle of ketchup on it. On the mantelpiece was a vase of artificial flowers and a photograph of the old Browders standing in their garden like tired and hardened pensioners. They had been a poor family, supported by Louisa, the cleverer of the daughters. There was a bleak armchair with wooden arms that dared anyone to sit on it. Andrews accepted the dare and sat, patting the arms as he waited. The call stopped and he now heard the voices of the sisters: Sarah's came through the door as one whispering, arguing hiss; Louisa's was warm, though with iron in it. He remembered how little she had moved her lips when she spoke; even in his harassed moments with her he had admired the way the voice tersely filled his office (and the street outside when they left the place together) with proverbial facts to be borne in mind, piquant in a spinsterish way. She had been slender, mannish, and brisk during the years she had worked with him. It had always astonished him when his jealous wife said, "She knows what she's after."

Now the door was opened and in came Louisa alone, wearing a heavy gray overcoat and carrying a large handbag. It was a principle with Andrews, especially in dealing with women, to smile and put them in the wrong at once.

"Sarah told me you were out," he said. "I just dropped in."

"I was dressing to go out," she said in her equally correcting way, but with a laziness that was new to him. "Sarah says you're here on business."

"Not really." He smiled. And then he came out with it, all charm: "I came especially to see *you*, to know how things are. And to thank you for your letter."

Except for the changeless voice, he could not believe that this dawdling woman was the Louisa he had known so well—even feared. All the way up in the train she had seemed to him to skip across the hedges and disappear into woods—a tall, busy woman, often not more than a pair of eyebrows and big dutiful eyes. In the office she had skillfully drooped her shoulders because he was shorter; now, in this room, she seemed short and there was more engaging shape and body to her. Her hands, which she used to clench, were now apart and at ease. Her glossy black hair was waved and, if she had aged and now wore glasses, the two streaks of swan-white hair over her ears looked dashing; her lips were firm, but her teeth were not set in the old attentiveness. With no desk to work at, no papers to hand to him, no telephone to answer, no memory of detail to store for him, she stood easily free. She had often worked late at the office with him because, as he

Critic, essayist, and story writer, V. S. Pritchett is the author of many books. *On the Edge of the Cliff* was published in paperback last month.

knew, she hated going back to her home. She had been good-humored but she rarely laughed. She had lived for the office, but now the nervous lines cut by office life had gone; her face was on holiday and open.

Still, after they had talked a little, she did say, with an old schoolteacher's satisfied mockery, "So you are a widower, Morton."

She spoke of him as a species. Morton was his second name. She had never used his first Christian name, which was Alfred. That belonged to his wife at home.

"Yes," he said, rather boasting of the fact.

"It is hard," she said, "to lose someone you love. I know how I felt when Mother died. I appreciated what I had lost."

Remarkable, when one thought of her complaints about her mother. He was annoyed that he had to grimace in order to indicate that he ought to have a tear to hold back.

He had forgotten Daisy's jealousy of Louisa and Louisa's silence about her—except for that letter of condolence. He suddenly found himself crumpling into an account of Daisy's long illness and her death, and how a week before she died her hair seemed to be golden again as it had been when she was a girl, and how her color came back. The tear fell and slipped into the corner of his mouth.

"And you still live in that big house?" Louisa said.

He recovered. "No, we moved into a smaller place five years ago, when I retired."

Louisa approved of the smaller house. "That was wise, I'm sure."

"How do you manage by yourself?" she said without concern. "Who looks after you?"

He had not come to talk to Louisa about this, but since his wife's death he had taken to rambling on to local people in the shops, even in the streets where he lived, to anyone, about the bemusing novelty of his new life. He could not stop himself. Grief had made him novel and he called himself "You."

"You get up in the morning," he was saying to Louisa, "if you don't forget to set the alarm the night before, and you go down and potter about in the blessed kitchen, so to speak, getting a cup of tea, and start taking it upstairs and then you stop—you see, you can have your tea where you like, upstairs or down—and you look into the refrigerator to see what is there; sometimes things smell, go wrong. You don't cook much, you fry something, perhaps, there's no decent place to eat near where we live. You forget things, don't lay the table. The laundry's the bother; a girl comes in, but these girls never clean properly and" (suddenly making a face) "her husband has a van or something, they're up all night dancing at clubs, gambling by the sound of it, bingo or whatever they call it, some such name. Can't make a bed. Comes when she

thinks she will." And, with passion, "No idea how to brush a carpet."

Andrews frowned at the wall.

The gingery young man next door had turned up the knob of his recorder and the music came whirling through the wall like a typhoon that blew through his clothes into his skin. It thumped and twanged and swirled in sounds nasal and self-pitying, men groaning, girls screaming their skirts off. He held up his hand to stop the noise. Raising his voice as if to order it to stop he said, embarrassed, "Her husband knocks her about; she showed me the bruises on her leg and on her shoulder: 'Look at these bruises, they come up black and blue in the night,' right up her bare leg," he said. "These young people laugh. I don't know what the idea is."

"I've got to get rid of that girl!" He was shouting again. For the moment he was addressing Daisy, the town, the world, and looked startled when he saw Louisa again.

"Girls are hard to get," Louisa said placidly. "Sarah can't get anyone."

"I've got to get away, sell the house," he said. "I was saying to Sarah, a town like this would suit me," he said. "A blow from the sea."

"Houses are expensive here," she said in her book-keeping voice. "You'd better stay where you are. You'd miss your children."

"They've got their own lives," he said. And he made his message clear to her. "One thing I've learned is that you can't live in the past."

They had been standing, but now she sat down at the table while he went back to the armchair. She had loosened her overcoat as if to let out the woman in her, but she held on to the handbag standing on the table. The music had stopped strangling the air but it had fallen into long, hiccuping passages of monotonous, indifferent drumming. The sound was like the sound of the wheels of the train when he had come up in the morning and when the trees looked girlish in the fields and he had imagined her as she used to be, before the quarrel—a friend, more sensible than poor Daisy had been. He had looked out of the window of the train once just in time to catch sight of a wide estuary where the sailing boats were moored, and in that glimpse of the sea he saw it had lost its air of heaving and grieving at its stored-up deaths and was waving like a flag. It had struck him when he walked up from the station in the shopping street that it was full of men and women whose arms and legs had been coiled up in bed with one another all night. Scores of women passed him, women you didn't know but who might slap your face if you stopped them and explained your situation. Yet, as they hurried by, they seemed to ask you why you didn't. What could you say? How do you begin it? You

have to get to know them. At his age he hadn't time for that sort of thing. The one woman he knew was this Louisa; she knew him and he knew her. In a funny sort of way they had had years of marriage in the office.

In the room he was arguing with the drumming that went on and on and he was even tapping his foot. Louisa looked years away from him at the table. The crowds of women in the streets and shops had been too near, too sudden, but the distance of Louisa made him stop tapping his foot. He crossed his legs and felt the imposing stillness of a desire that he had never felt before. Desire in a cheap place like this!

He said, in an unnaturally high voice, going back to what he had already said, "Sarah looks well"—which was untrue—"and so do you."

"Thank you," said Louisa. "She is."

"You must have a lot to do, running this place," he said. "She said you were full up."

"I believe she is," said Louisa. "Everything in the town gets full up in the holidays. I don't live *here*, you know," she said with a small, condescending laugh.

"I thought you did," he said, feeling in his pocket for her letter.

"No, I'm at the hotel," she said. "More comfortable. We sold the old house in London when Mother died."

Moved to a hotel! She seemed to leave her distance and come closer to him. As a salesman he had spent so much of his life in hotels. He loved, of course, those great acres of carpets in the grand ones; hotels were palaces of pleasure and money. Their very upholstery sent messages of erotic sensation when one touched it. Even in a small hotel—in a town like this—the guests, the waiters, the servants and clerks, were like figures in a dream as they walked silently from room to room. When telephones rang they carried voices from another world. One became a dream oneself.

"I was going to say," he said, showing his new admiration of her worth, "that this place did not seem like you." And he waved disparagingly at the furniture. "You've done what I ought to do." He shouted for a third time decisively at the music. "You're at The George?" he challenged. "Don't tell me you're at The George!" he laughed. "I had lunch there today. Very comfortable. Good fish. I didn't see *you*!"

He uncrossed his legs and felt himself become a wonder.

"No," she said, smiling at him mischievously—her first real smile. "I'm up the hill near the church. The Clarence. Quieter. More select."

"Sea view?" he said greedily.

"Of course—every room—and a nice garden."

It was yet another principle of his never to be at a loss, whereupon he pulled a list of local hotels from his pocket.

"Yes, here it is. The Clarence, thirty-seven rooms, all with sea view."

Louisa said, "Twenty-five pounds a day. With bath. Service and VAT not included. Weekly terms."

"That's right," said Andrews. And, congratulating her, "Pricey."

"Not for what you get," she said.

The Browders had been a poor, skimping family, carefully putting money away. Extraordinary. Louisa must have saved a lot to be staying in a hotel like The Clarence.

"Why don't we have dinner there tonight? Let me buy you dinner," he said grandly.

"I can't do that, Morton," she said.

"Or at The George," he said, "if you want a change. Funny thing about The George—they have got that carpet, like the one I sold when we were at Brighton years ago, one of our lines, the Demeter Floral, chocolate and flowers. You remember it, I'm sure. Chrysanthemums in an urn."

He laughed eagerly. "It will be just like old times."

Louisa frowned at that. "Morton, I'm not *staying* at The Clarence. I'm not a guest. I work there in the office. We're very busy. I've got to go in a minute and see about the dinners. Twelve Germans have just booked in. That was Reception ringing up when you were talking to Sarah."

Louisa diminished in his eyes. He gaped.

"Working there? Did you say working?" said Andrews. He was offended with her because he had made a mistake. He turned on the boy next door. "I wish Sarah would make that boy stop his infernal noise, you can't hear what anyone says."

Louisa frowned at him. "Oh, that! That's Peter, my stepson, he's working for his exams. He always puts his recorder on when he's working. I'm used to it, I suppose, but it gets on his father's nerves. That's why we send Peter down here to Sarah's, but he eats with us at the hotel. When you run a hotel you have to put the guests first."

"Stepson?" he said.

The air seemed to go out of his lungs with a whistle and his voice went up high as a boy's and she seemed to him to jump up and down, like a film gone wrong, between floor and ceiling.

"I am a stepmother," she pronounced, as one who was equipped with a two-fisted power.

Andrews was suddenly clamped between the arms of the narrow chair. His mouth was left open with no words in it, a foolish red hole he could not close. It seemed to him that she was not one woman but had become part of the general chorus of women he had

seen in the streets of the town, impersonally swinging their handbags and lugging their shopping bags, taunting him with their indifference. In his bewilderment he lost all sense of time, as he often did through living alone, and was on the point of saying aloud, "Daisy will have a fit when I tell her this."

He recovered enough to say, "I don't believe you."

A rival widower had stolen a march on him! There was also the affront that, as a former employee and office possession, she had not consulted him first.

He felt in his pocket for her letter, which lately he had taken to carrying, as a kind of invoice. He took it out and, putting on his glasses, read it. Looking over the top of his glasses he said, "You didn't say you were married here."

It was signed in her maiden name.

"I wasn't married then," she said, formally. "Mr. Forrester and I were married last year, when his divorce came through."

Louisa fattened with pride when she threw out the word "divorce." She was conveying that she was not a consoling nurse or frustrated spinster, fit only for an enfeebled widower. She was not a victim! She had attracted a man so much that he had divorced his wife. There was a note of rebuke in this: what had Andrews done for her? Casually she dropped the subject.

"My husband manages The Clarence. We belong to a chain." The word "chain" enlarged her importance. "So does The George. When we are full up we can always send people down there."

Andrews could summon only a faint sarcasm. "You seem to own the town," he said.

Not leaving the matter there, she pretended to be hurt.

"I don't know why you are so surprised, Morton. Actually you have met my husband."

He was in the dock, accused. As coolly as he could, he said, "Met him? I don't think I have. Where? What is his name?"

"The same as mine," she said. "I told you. Forrester. Jack Forrester."

He felt in his pocket again, but gave up.

"I don't remember any Forrester," he said.

"Oh, Morton!" she said archly. "Think! Brighton! June '74. The trade exhibition. When you got that big contract for Demeter Floral. You remember *that*, I'm sure."

There they were, bang in the middle of their quarrel. Surely, after all these years, she was not going to drag that up?

"I remember I pulled off a ten-thousand-pound order," he boasted. He could at any rate dismiss her marriage.

"I am not talking about carpets," she said between her teeth. Her eyes, which were made larger by her glasses, seemed to him to be rummaging into their old working life together, as if it had been a waste. A question was in them, idly put there to gratify some private vanity.

He was not going to be fool enough, in his present situation, to gratify that.

He knew the stare was unforgiving, that she might force her question upon him. He had smoothed away all his memories of that only too comprehensible time at Brighton, but now he remembered going back to the hotel where they were staying, where she was waiting in the foyer for him. He remembered her saying with excitement, "Did you bring it off?" And he had said, "Let's get out of this." They had crossed the street to the promenade and he remembered the long, flaunting, floodlit seafront where the flags were flying from the hotels and from the tall lamp standards, and how the lights had blacked out all sight of the whispering sea. The front was like a stage set; the crowd looked clownish as they passed from lamp to lamp. She had put her arm on his as he talked about his success. Usually at trade exhibitions they dined at the hotel with people in the trade and she left him early with the men, but this night she had persuaded him to celebrate at a restaurant. They drank a glass or two of champagne and then they dawdled back to the hotel, where she had circumspectly taken her pinching hand from his arm again as they went across the foyer to the lift; but there she had held his arm again and squeezed it as they went up to their floor. At the door of her room, rather embarrassingly, she kept him talking, her voice getting quieter. Her fingers pretended to pick a piece of cotton from the lapel of his jacket.

"Come in for a minute," she had mumbled, as if she were eating. And there was an eating look in her eyes.

Andrews had been startled. He remembered thinking he ought not to have let her drink that champagne. He looked at his watch and said, "Good God! Do you know what time it is? I haven't rung Daisy yet to tell her the news. I'm late."

It was then he saw her face turn and there had been a twist of anger on it. Then it became suddenly hard, empty-eyed, like a mask of brass in the sick yellow light of the hotel corridor, as he said, "Good night" in a fatherly way and went down to his own room at the end. He was surprised that she banged her door. He was glad; he couldn't sit up half the night with her talking about the troubles of the Browder family.

But the next day! Andrews had never been able to tell his wife what had happened on the second evening. Daisy wouldn't have believed him. She would have shouted triumphantly that she had "known it for years."

That evening contained a lump of his history, heavy in his mind, entangled in outrage and the inadmissible desire he had never recognized and had succeeded in locking out of memory until today. Now, talking to this married Louisa, in this miserable little villa by the sea, every fragment of it came alive again.

The day after their "celebration," Louisa had been late at the firm's stand at the show. Not surprisingly, she had a headache. He told her to go and lie down. He himself had been so taken up with the details of his sale that he didn't get back to his room at the hotel until seven in the evening. When he got there the telephone was ringing. That pest Sarah! The Browder family up in arms! Where was Louisa? Sarah said she had been ringing all day. Their mother was ill again. Dying, of course. Old Mrs. Browder was dying in every call Sarah had made for years. Louisa must go home at once. When she did go, there was never anything wrong with Mrs. Browder.

To cut Sarah short, he said, "I'm sure she's in her room. There must be some mistake. I'll go and see."

And he had gone and knocked and knocked at the door, for he could hear voices. He had heard a man's voice call, "Who the hell is that? Tell him to go away."

Louisa had come to the door in a yellow dressing gown—very yellow.

"It's only Mr. Andrews," she called back to a red-haired man who came out of the bathroom saying, "Tell him to buzz off and mind his own business."

The man had a necktie in his hand and was barefoot. The scene was so incredible to Andrews that he scarcely recognized Louisa or what—if anything—he said to her. But he congratulated himself on remembering the exact words he said to the man: "I am addressing my secretary! Her mother is very ill."

"I'll ring Sarah later, Mr. Andrews," was all Louisa had said. "She's always checking up on me."

And she had shut the door in his face.

He still did not believe what he had seen. He went to his room. He rang Sarah and in a muddled way said first that Louisa was asleep and then that she was with friends.

"That's a lie," said Sarah. "She's with you. I can hear her. Do you think I don't know what's going on between you?"

Andrews had had enough of the Browders. He lost his temper.

"If you want to know, she's picked up some man in the bar," he said.

Sarah astounded him by laughing. "That will stop you messing about, won't it? I've always been sorry for your wife."

Now, in Sarah's house, with the old Browders looking at him from their photograph on the mantelpiece, he saw Louisa was waiting for him to speak.

"You told Sarah you *had* met him," she said. "It was not very nice of you, Morton. He is my husband now, so really, you see it might be awkward to have dinner with you. Really, I don't think this town would suit you, do you? And now I must go and you must catch your train. Sarah's taking me to The Clarence and she'll drop you at the station. Was there anything else you wanted to ask me?"

"Nothing," he said.

The handle of the door moved. Sarah, he guessed, had been listening at the door, for in she came and said, "Now, then, Louisa, your husband's rung again."

In the car Louisa said to Sarah, "Tell Peter to remember to put on a tie if he's coming up to dinner."

Nothing more was said.

Andrews saw The Clarence, of course, but *nothing, nothing, nothing*, the wheels of the train hammered, like Sarah's voice, as he was carried back to London. Passing the estuary in the dusk, he saw the boats were flying no pennants and no flags. □

UNTITLED POEM by Alan Dugan

The doctor and I have become intimate.

He has wheeled me off to a dark room
where we can be alone together.

He hums "For I Am a Pirate King"

from *The Pirates of Penzance*

as he pries out my eyeball

and lays it on my cheek. "Don't flinch,"

he says. "You could hurt yourself that way."

I start screaming, "Black Eye Patch,

Black Eye Patch. Pirate. Pirate."

He says to stop screaming. What

will the patients out there think?

"I can't give you an anesthetic just

yet because this is just a diagnosis

but don't worry, you won't feel a thing

during the operation." "I thought this was

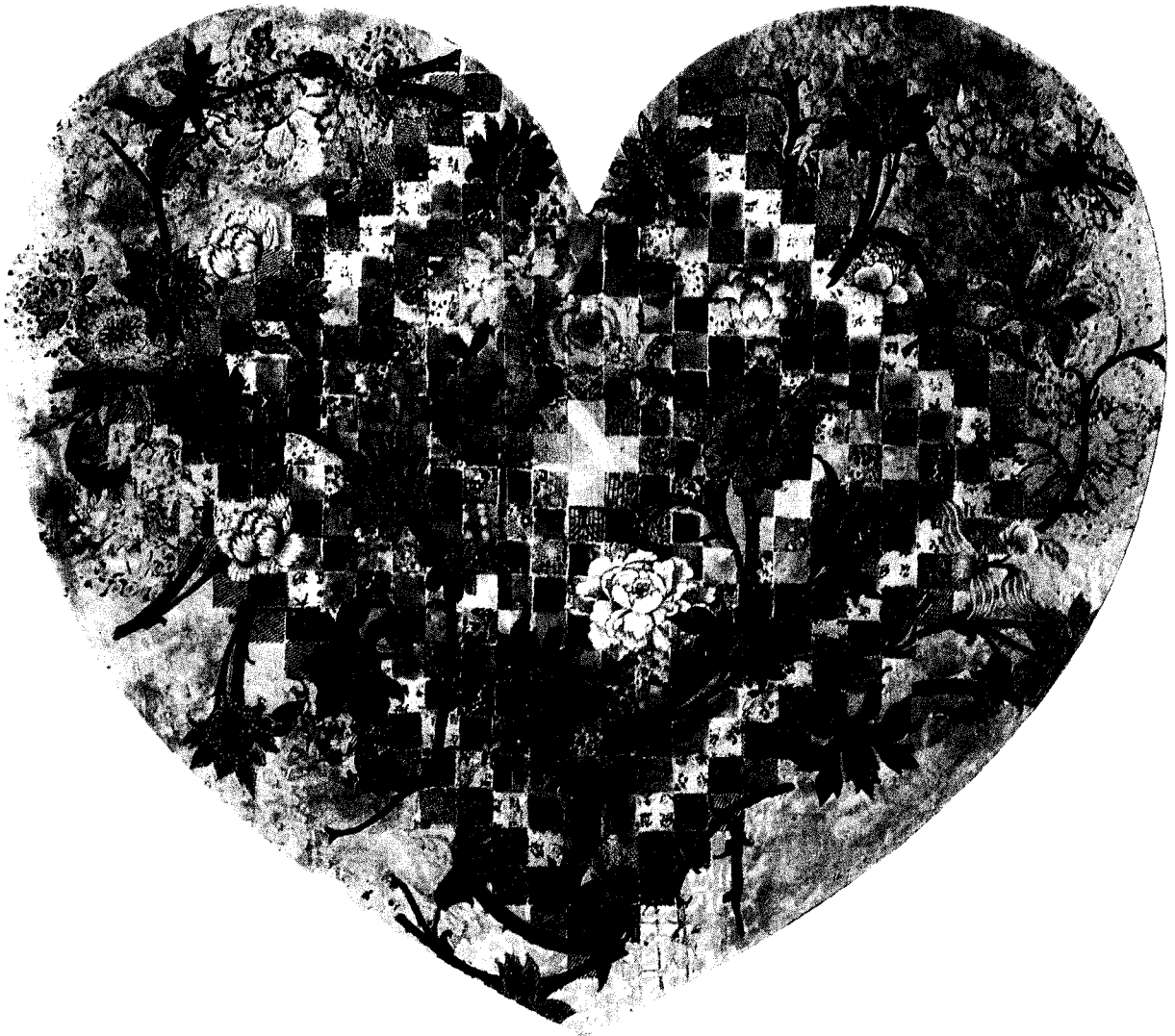
the operation," I shouted. "Silly," he said.

He fondled my eyeball and gave me a soul kiss.

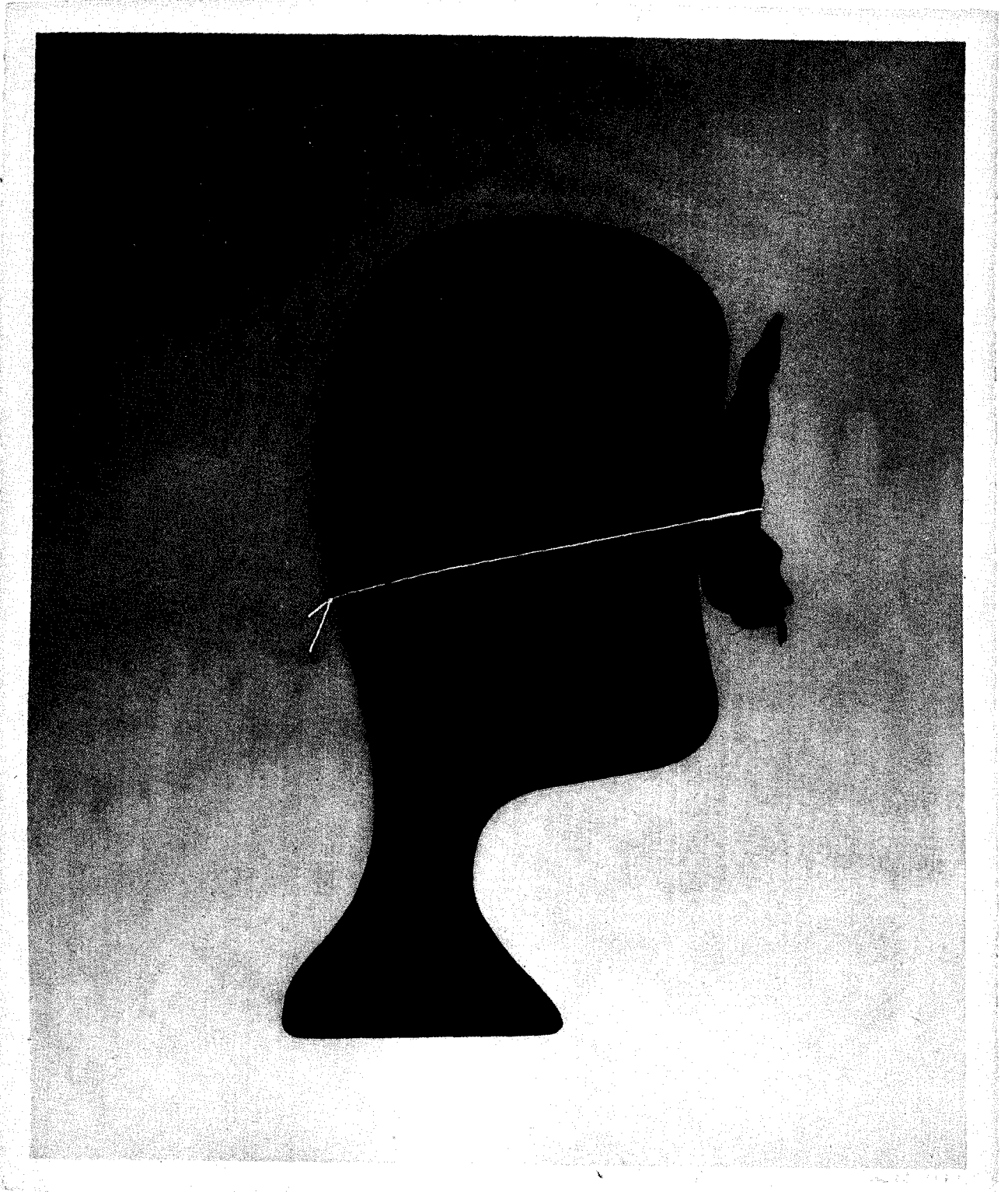
"This is just the beginning of our relationship."

ARTISTS' VALENTINES

An Atlantic portfolio

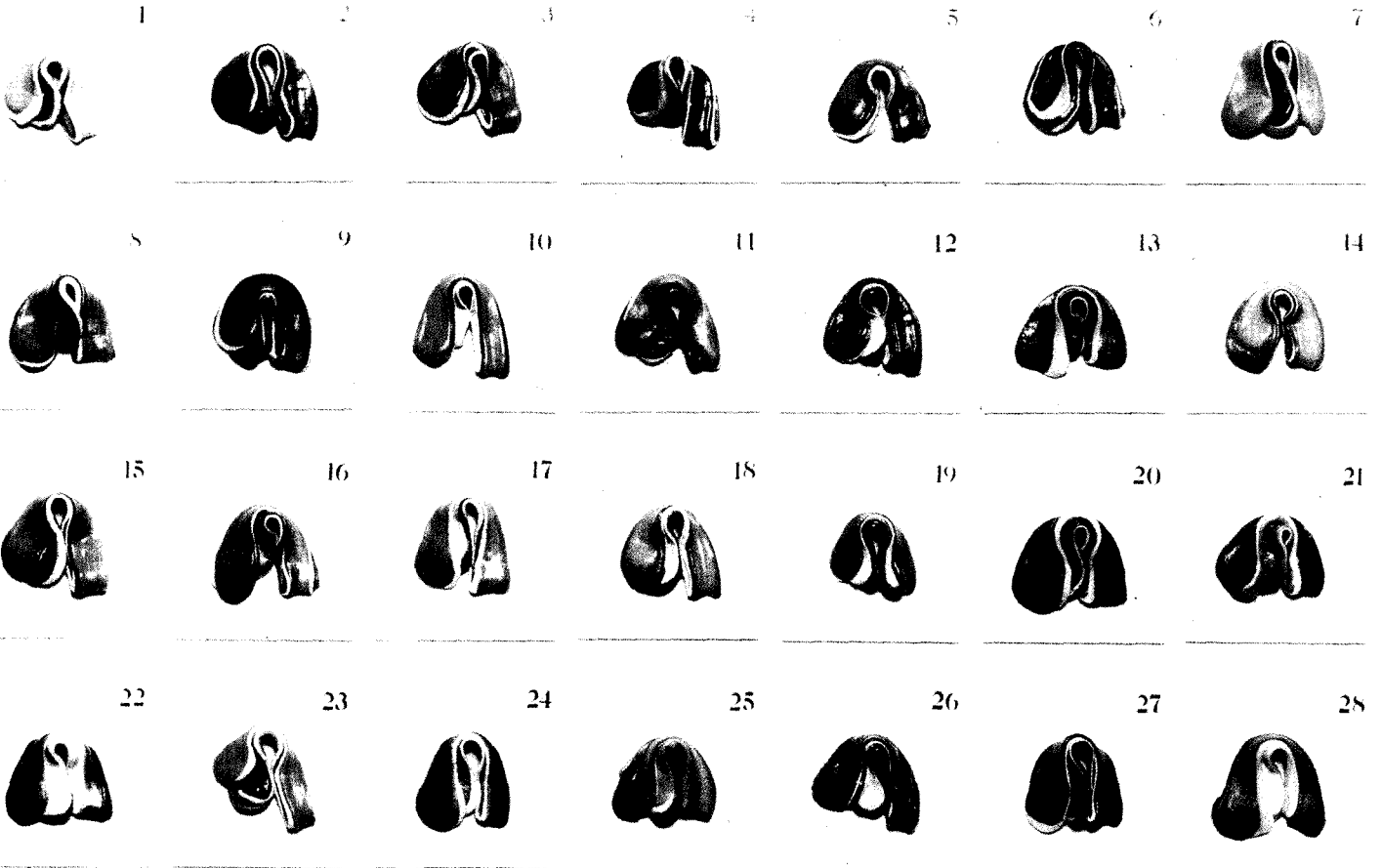


Miriam Schapiro, THE INSPIRED HEART,
acrylic and fabric on canvas.

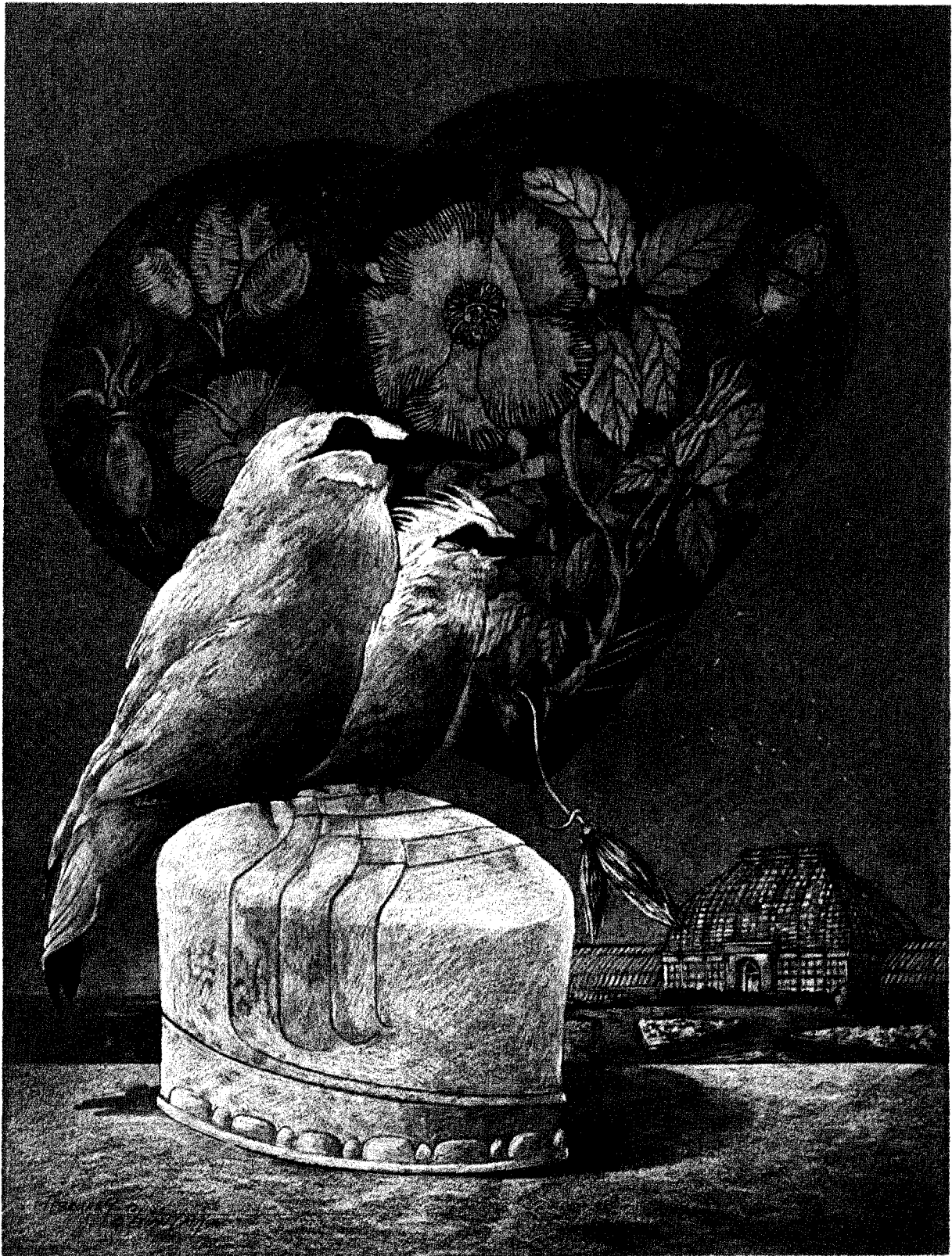


Todd McKie, KISS ME, I'M ITALIAN, watercolor on paper.

Hannah Wilke, THANK YOU FROM HANNAH, chewing gum on graph paper. "The gum was chewed by Princeton University art history students who masticated their way through a recent lecture in my studio."

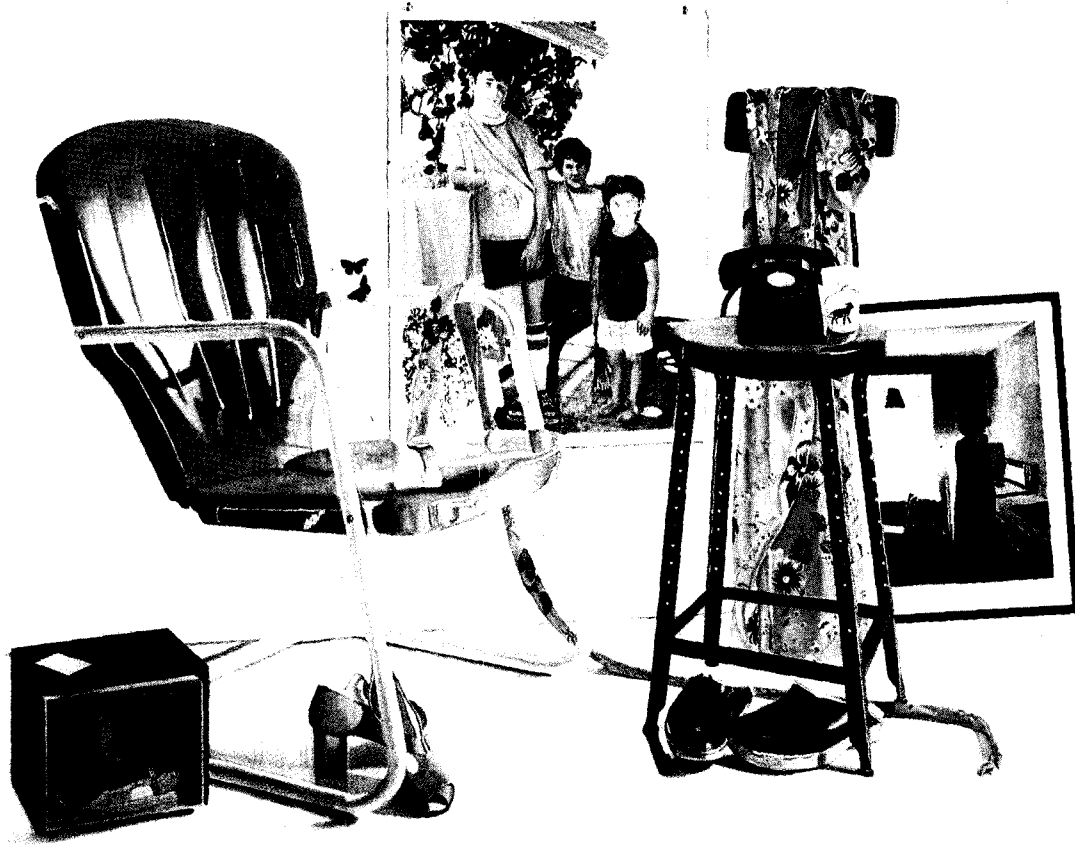


tHank you
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Ellen Lanyon, FEBRUARY, Prismacolor pencil on Canson paper.

Alfred Leslie, SUNPORCH, watercolor and gouache on canvas (copyright Alfred Leslie). "Late Echo" by John Ashbery in Alfred Leslie's hand (copyright © 1979, by John Ashbery).



Late Echo

Alone with our madness and favorite flower
 We see that there really is nothing left to ~~too~~ write about.
 Or rather, it is necessary to write about the same old things
 In the same way, repeating the same things over and over
 For love to continue and be gradually different.

Bee hives and ants have to be reexamined eternally
 And the color of the day put in
 Hundreds of times and varied from summer to winter
 For it to get slowed down to the pace of an authentic
 Saraband and huddle there, alive and resting.

Only then can the chronic inattention
 Of our lives drape itself around us, conciliatory
 And with one eye on those long tan plush shadows
 That speak so deeply into our unprepared knowledge
 Of ourselves, the talking engines of our day

JOHN ASHBERRY

SOME YOUNGER POETS

HURDLE MILLS, NC by Barbara Thomsen

Even before the scream, we were too late.
Mrs. Maddox flung her broom from the door,
Scattering cats like ashes on a hearth.
We circled the trailer just as the dog
We'd always called gentle turned in flight.
You caught her up by the hackles, cursed her out,
And shook her within an inch of her life—
When the great jaws loosened, something little fell.

Not a mole this time, I heard you say,
Though it could have been, for size and color.
I held the hurt kitten with both hands,
The damp fur, the bones like water,
The eyes shallow and milky as breath on glass,
The head that lolled over like a broken flower.

He'll be all right, you said, he'll pull through,
As though we knew no better. I said yes,
And bent over closer to him,
Watching his eyes slowly focus
And battered sense darken like a bruise,
My scent upon him like an enemy,
My stink in his throat. He spat and spat it out,
Covered my wrists in slight, stinging ribbons,
And held the world off once before he died.

Patty turned to her mother and went inside.
The dog sat panting quietly at our feet,
And the static of summer woods was on the breeze.

QUARRY by Fran Lindsay

Quarry is house that's gone
and says follow. Quarry's
a basement made of swaying
buttresses, depth that lifts
to an algae of clouds.

Sky strikes home on the quarry's
roof, like a warm green floor.

In a painting of quarry,
fishermen appear
in rain, their galoshes

ringing with buckles,
their slickers
chips of childish yellow.
In the painting,
start with the rain that has struck

already; work upward.
Keep everything captured
in a frame of stone shore.
Last, the protective cloud
where the fishermen stand
reflection-deep in their sky,

posing for catch and not thinking
of fish. The sky includes
grass and rain and the ponchos
and algae like cloud
tangled in tackle.
Then it joins the heaven, the roof

on the quarry's big-colored room
of water.

AMNIOS

by Peggy Rizza

The musical *dunk!* and fluid whine
of oars, then oarlocks, at night
on the lake, silent except for its deep,
wet breathing and the small
voice of cricket, frog, and fish. All
we need to know: this weight
and dark, this deepness, loss, and silence,
which are heard instead of seen.
The black trees on the shore are far
away tonight, and we are
the center of an edgeless power.
The heavy lake is firm beneath us.
It opens itself only to my oar,
my hand, then closes quiet,
and alone again. We rock,
in the eternity before birth, lonely
and belonging, in the mossy sleep
of water, voiceless, chiming, green, and dark.

FEBRUARY

by Ken Leeder

The sharp fast ticking of duck wings
over the creek, over the shallow snow
packing the rustle of weed stalks,
over the hawking of skate blades

on the pond—
as dusk slowly
matches tones
with the smoke of a large bonfire.

A NEEDLE BED

by Brad Leithauser

Under the longleaf pines
The curved, foot-long needles have
Woven a thatchwork quilt—threads,
Not patches, windfall millions
Looped and overlapped to make
The softest of needle beds.

The day's turned hot, the air
Coiling around the always
Chill scent of pine. As if lit
From below, a radiance
Warmer yet more clement than
The sun's, the forest-carpet

Glow. It's a kind of pelt:
Thick as a bear's, tawny like
A bobcat's, more wonderful
Than both—a maize labyrinth,
Spiraling down through tiny
Chinks to a caked, vegetal

Ferment where the needles
Crumble and blacken. And still
The mazing continues . . . whorls
Within whorls, the downscaling
Yet-perfect intricacies
Of lichens, seeds and crystals.

UNWANTED IMMIGRANTS

Cuban Prisoners in America

by James Conaway

The last of America's Cuban refugees, some 6000 strong, still live a closely guarded life on an Army base in western Arkansas. If some harbor criminal impulses, many others want only the chance to fit into the quiltwork of American life.

The MP at the main gate handed me a visitor's pass and saluted with the pleasant formality of America's volunteer Army. The olive-drab duty cap rested on a mass of auburn hair; the two-foot nightstick swung against soft, ample hips. "Have a nice day," she said, pointing me toward barricades wrapped in concertina wire.

The razored edges of the metal glinted in the late afternoon sunlight. It was the end of September, and chilly. Beyond the barricades stretched rows of white clapboard barracks, stark and in need of paint, built forty years before to house a division bound for the war in Europe. A plaque outside the gate declared that these 72,000 rolling acres in western Arkansas had been named after a Major General Adna R. Chaffee, founder of the modern armored cavalry. Fort Chaffee has been used as a summer training camp for the Army Reserve and National Guard and as a mobilization site

in case of national emergency. In late September, 4000 Cubans lived there; 6000 more were to be transferred there from detention centers being closed in other parts of the country. They were the last of 125,000 Cubans who had landed unexpectedly on the coast of Florida the previous spring, and had been sent to this remote part of the United States until the U.S. government could decide what to do with them.

The press center was housed in Building 1091, a converted barracks equipped with pay telephones and four mammoth air-conditioners installed at the end of the summer but never used because no electrical outlets were available. A notice on the metal desk by the door stated that reporters could go nowhere inside the fort unaccompanied. I added my name to the list on the clipboard, and was issued a pass by a press escort wearing cowboy boots. He offered to drive me down to the "enclave"—the main detention center, surrounded by three miles of fence and well out of sight of the highway.

We got into a car belonging to the Cuban-Haitian Task Force (an ad hoc arm of the U.S. State Department) and rode past uninhabited barracks and more concertina wire, which followed the contours of the fields with reptilian grace. My escort said that he had been unemployed when the Army's computer spat out his name; he was now earning something more than the minimum wage. His face lacked the severe Calvinist

angularity I had noticed in other Arkansans, but his voice carried the vibrant Ozark twang.

"These Cubans coming in here from Fort McCoy," he said of the refugees who had arrived that day from Wisconsin aboard a chartered DC-8, "they thought they were going to get beat up at Chaffee, and have dogs sicked on 'em. Some have enemies here they made in prison, back in Cuba. Everybody's expecting trouble."

Chaffee seemed a strange place to find the outcasts of a Marxist dependency in the Caribbean. This base was the first processing and detention center opened outside of Florida, and the scene of the first bloody clash between Cubans and their hosts. Five Cubans were shot by state troopers in June in a demonstration that spilled over the borders of the fort and seemed to prove allegations that Castro had exiled thousands of criminals to America's shores. It provided glimpses of the violent consequences of our own apparent good will, and of the way our government deals with the unexpected. Chaffee was important because the fear and recrimination spawned here continued into the present, and because it was now the last stop for a dispossessed mass of humanity still without status or much hope.

We topped a rise and I saw the enclave for the first time. MPs sat in jeeps at the intersection, radio antennas clamped to the windshields; behind them rose a ten-foot fence topped with concertina. Burly Federal Protective Service guards in black uniforms and sunglasses stood just inside the gate. From there the restricted road dipped toward what was known as "G-Pop" (general population), a roughly mile-square area of barracks and open ground that was dark with bodies: supposedly the detritus of Cuban society, the bottom of Castro's barrel.

We passed task force headquarters, and the buildings backed up to the center that housed the various security forces, the medical services, and the voluntary agencies, known as "Volags." A contingent of the Army's Reactionary Force, wearing fatigues and helmets with plastic visors and carrying three-foot batons, fell into formation for routine maneuvers.

The Cubans on the other side of the fence were overwhelmingly male, and half of them appeared to be black. The most common elements in their dress were Levis and "cat hats"—baseball-style caps bearing the insignia of American industries that had donated them to the Red Cross. The Cubans strolled behind wooden barricades, watching the Americans, in a kind of jail-house *paseo* that stretched from one end of the enclave to the other. One Cuban stood still, holding up a handful of artificial flowers.

"They sell those things," my escort explained. "They're made out of copper wire and thread. The

Cubans were tearing the telephone lines out of the barracks to get the wire, until somebody had the good sense to give them some."

I asked what else was for sale.

"There's vice, black-marketing. I don't blame 'em. If I was in there I'd be making hooch too, trying to get me a little."

I wanted to visit the enclave, but was not allowed in after dark. My escort said I would have to return the next day, when I could be assigned a "bi-ling"—a Cuban who spoke English and would act as a translator. He took me back through the depressing sameness of the fort to the press center and my rented Omni.

I drove west on Highway 22 toward the town of Fort Smith, which borders Chaffee, past the spot where Cubans had encountered state troopers, past Gun City ("Handguns, Ammo, Rifles, Holsters") and a portable roadside marquee announcing, "Believe It or Not, Jesus Is Lord." I checked into a motel next to the interstate, in a commercial swath identical to that ringing any other American city. The view from my balcony was of the Sheraton, McDonald's, and Godfather's Pizza, but what I saw in my mind was a figure in a Homelite cat hat hawking twisted wire and colored thread, in a place where there were no buyers.



I returned to Chaffee the next morning. A yellow bus was parked outside 1091, ready to transport reporters to the airport where a DC-8 was bringing in more refugees from McCoy. I could see the plane circling lazily a mile away. The morning edition of the *Southwest Times Record* on the seat beside me carried a front-page story about the closing of a local motel used as a halfway house for a handful of Cubans who had left their sponsors. A photograph showing two flagrantly homosexual Cubans smirking in an open window had been taken not at the motel but inside the enclave, a fact the story failed to mention.

"The press hasn't been too responsible," said Sylvia Spencer, the task-force spokesperson and diminutive focus of the acrimony of reporters unhappy with the restrictions placed upon them. "Sometimes the television stations send out three crews a day to film the Cubans. They can't wait for Chaffee to have its first murder."

She took me to the processing center for the new arrivals, where MPs and Border Patrolmen in their dark green, flat-brimmed hats stood side by side in Chaffee's jurisdictional jungle. In addition to the Army and Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), Chaffee's Cubans were obliged to deal with several other government agencies: the Park Police, the Federal Protective Service (FPS), the Departments of State and Justice, Health and Human Services, the General Services Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Customs, the FBI, and, no doubt, the CIA. The Park Police handled internal security for the enclave; the FPS, U.S. marshals, and contract guards from the Sebastian County sheriff's office manned the gates, and the military patrolled the area between the enclave's periphery and the outer limits of Chaffee. Border Patrolmen on the other side treated the fort as if it were a foreign country in the throes of revolution.

Ordinarily, in September, Chaffee would have operated with a skeleton military contingent and about one hundred civilians, but because of the Cubans, almost 600 soldiers were on duty there, along with 300 government support personnel and 1500 locals from Fort Smith and environs. Twenty-five million dollars had already been spent.

The job of running the refugee program at Chaffee had been taken away from FEMA in July and given to State, which had assigned it to their Cuban-Haitian Task Force. The task force gave the job of director to a man on loan from Health and Human Services. But he had no control over security, the most important single

function at Chaffee; neither did the Army. The captain of the Park Police was nominally in charge of security, but in fact decisions were made on an ad hoc basis in what were later described to me as "very frank meetings" of the heads of the various police agencies.

The Fort Chaffee story really began in April 1980, in Havana, when the guards at the Peruvian Embassy were removed and thousands of Cubans crowded into the compound seeking asylum. The United States agreed to accept 3500 after standard screening abroad by the INS, but Castro opened the port of Mariel to anyone wishing to leave, and soon hundreds of boats were ferrying Cubans to Florida in what became known as the Freedom Flotilla. Among the passengers were many considered socially or politically deviant in Cuba, and inmates of prisons, hospitals, and psychiatric wards whom Castro had dumped on the docks in a cold-blooded gesture of contempt and realpolitik. Boat owners and charterers discovered that they had to transport these people if their friends and families were also to be allowed to leave. The press in America was quick to pick up on the undesirable element among what were termed "refugees."

The influx of Cubans in south Florida overwhelmed the INS and the community services trying to cope with them. President Carter declared a state of emergency, which automatically brought in the Federal Emergency Manpower Agency as coordinator of the other bureaucracies involved. FEMA had recently been formed as an amalgam of the Federal Fire Administration, the Defense & Civil Preparedness Administration, the Federal Insurance Administration, the Federal Preparedness Agency, and the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration; an independent entity, its role was to "task" the other agencies, including the Army, and to report directly to the President. Working with the Department of Defense and the General Services Administration, FEMA opened up additional processing centers at Elgin and at Chaffee. In the meantime, statements from the White House swung between self-congratulation for the humanitarian role played by the United States and condemnation of Castro for breaking international law. "We will not permit our country," Carter said, "to be used as a dumping ground for criminals who represent a danger to our society."

By mid-May, more than 18,000 Cubans were living at Chaffee, in conditions far less secure than those I have described. The concertina wire had not yet been put into place, and nothing stood between the Cubans and the outside of the fort except a low perimeter fence and MPs armed with batons they were not permitted to use. The arrangement had proved adequate in handling a much larger number of Asians five years before, when the Army's role had been that of caretak-

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er and protector of the Vietnamese refugees. "The Vietnamese always agree," said task force director Don Whitteaker, with admirable hindsight, "and the Cubans always question." No one bothered to tell that to the Army at the time, a task that might have been performed by the State Department, but State was almost invisible at Chaffee in May. FEMA had no experience with aliens; what little experience it did have was limited to organizing relief for disaster victims. "FEMA does a terrific job of spending money," said one witness to the events of May. The management and security of an installation the size of Chaffee were beyond their ken. But FEMA had been set up to handle emergencies, and the Cubans were an emergency.

They became more so as they began to venture off the base, singly and in small groups, driven by boredom, frustration, or curiosity. The Army sent out wagons to fetch them back to Chaffee after they had been picked up by sheriff's deputies, state troopers, or the Fort Smith police, although none of these forces had any right to detain illegal aliens. That was a job for the INS and the Border Patrol, who were busy processing the Cubans, and woefully undermanned. The absconders, or "walk-offs," caused alarm among local residents and improved business for local arms merchants.

"People here decided they didn't want the Cubans before they saw them," said Jack Freeze, the mayor of Fort Smith, who still doesn't want them. "The press had already said they were bad. I went out there and saw that a lot of them were covered with tattoos. I knew they couldn't be productive. There might be a Desi Arnaz or two out there, but mostly they were going to be killing one another."

The Army's position was that it could not be used as a posse to round up the walk-offs, or to contain them forcefully at Chaffee. The Army's man, General James Drummond, took pains to demonstrate that the Army was friendly. A natural sympathy existed between the Cubans and the soldiers, who were also young, underpaid, and likely to belong to a minority. They played softball together, with General Drummond pitching.

Meanwhile, frustration mounted among the refugees. Many had already been sponsored by their families in America but could not leave Chaffee without official clearance. A security clearance from Washington required a minimum of ten days, and usually longer; many files were lost. No one bothered to explain to the Cubans why they were still being held, or what their prospects were. On the night of May 26, about 200 of them decided to stroll through the rural community of Jenny Lind, which borders Chaffee to the south, in spite of the efforts of soldiers and FEMA officials to keep them on the base. Some of Jenny Lind's residents climbed up onto their roofs with guns; shots were fired but no one was injured.

Klansmen appeared on the highway outside the fort, wearing robes and carrying signs that said, "We Do Not Support Communist Criminals." Residents of Jenny Lind and the neighboring town of Barling carried revolvers on their hips; some talked openly of killing Cubans. Local pockets of influence such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Exchange Club shared Mayor Freeze's view of the Cubans and of the government that had foisted them on the people of Arkansas. The fact that the Cubans' presence meant jobs and extra revenue cut no ice at all. Fort Smith wanted more than that: 200 acres of Chaffee land for use as a landfill, compensation for the cost of apprehending walk-offs within the city limits, the resurfacing of runways supposedly damaged by plane loads of Cuban refugees, and a new water system. The federal government did little to enlist the help of these burghers, who several times a day on television and in the *Southwest Times Record* saw photographs of masses of people—more threatening than Mongolian tribesmen—who were living only a few miles away.

Incredibly, the issue of security remained unresolved on the federal level. Government officials with influence on decisions made about Chaffee still do not want to be identified; many refused to be interviewed. The consensus seemed to be that this was a time when the bureaucracy should operate anonymously, and so it did. The White House had ultimate authority, but preferred to let the various agencies work out a communal decision. The Army wanted the Justice Department to send in U.S. marshals, although thousands would have been required to cordon off the base. Justice wanted the Army to use its batons to shove the more assertive Cubans away from the gate, and even crack a few heads if need be. The White House tacitly agreed with Justice, but wanted the Cubans contained with as little political fallout as possible. A presidential order compelling the Army to act as a police force required determination, and risk. A Carter aide sharing responsibility for the Chaffee operation told me that such an order was delivered verbally by him to Defense. Orders were eventually devised giving the Army greater leeway in the exercise of security, a safe, collective decision that unfortunately surfaced several days too late.

Frustration over the delays in processing at Chaffee became so apparent that the INS kept its center open the night of May 31. A few Cubans threw rocks at it, and the center was promptly closed. The next morning, a Sunday, about 200 Cubans walked past the MPs at the main gate, along the shoulder of Highway 22, and through adjacent fields, picking flowers and behaving, as one soldier put it, "as if they were on their way to a sit-in." They did sit, in the

middle of the road in Barling, separated by sheriff's deputies and troopers from a gathering crowd of civilians. The police forced the Cubans back over the fence and onto Army property, where the Army's Reactionary Force transported them back to the barracks.

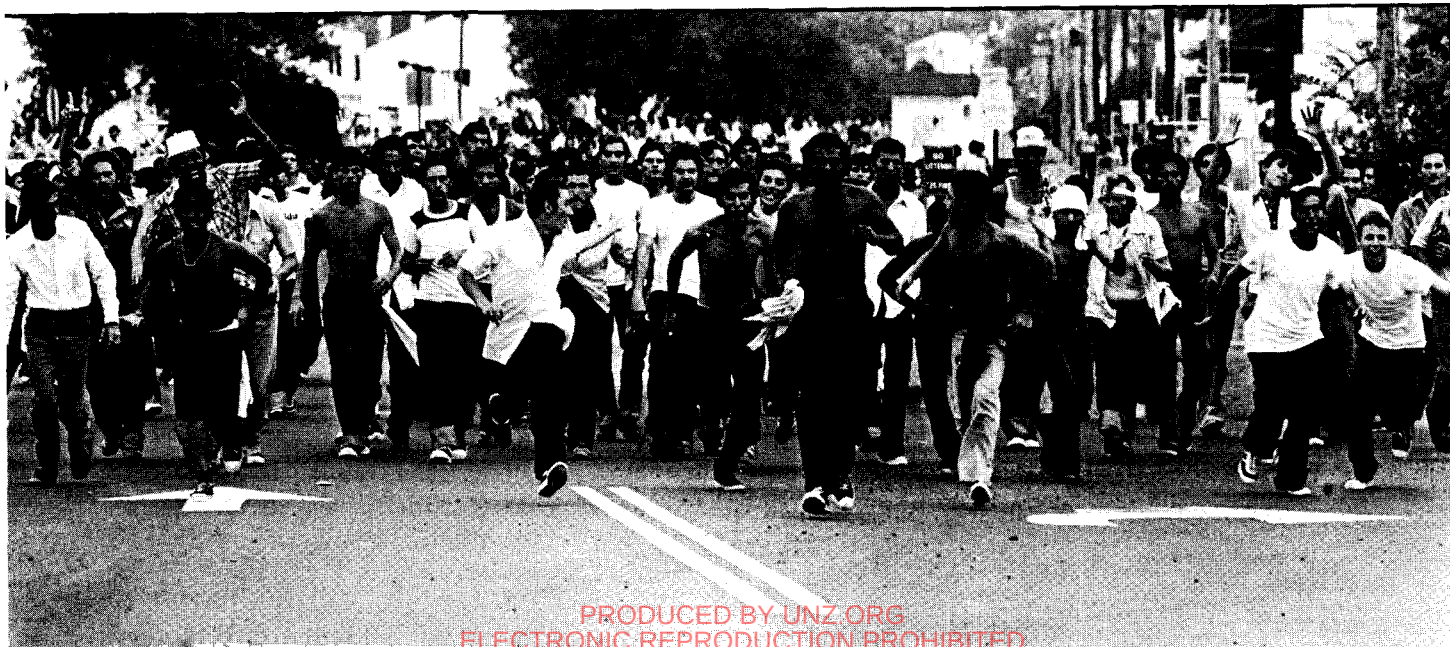
Demonstrations were held at the fort throughout the day, and speeches were delivered, both for and against the U.S. government. Late that afternoon, Cubans again pushed past the military police and onto the edge of the highway, guarded now by troopers and sheriff's deputies. (A photograph printed across the entire front page of a local newspaper the next morning, with the caption "About 300 shrieking, rock-hurling refugees surge through main gate at Chaffee," shows mostly teenagers breaking into a trot, some laughing, some dancing, none throwing rocks. What most annoyed people, according to the editor, was the sight of all those new black sneakers that had been issued by the government.)

The Cubans moved west, collecting rocks and pieces of asphalt. The police kept abreast of them on the other side of the highway, and came under a sustained barrage about half a mile from Gate Three. "No one was helping us," said Captain Deloin Causey, who was in charge of the State Police. He saw several troopers go down, including one hit in the temple; he claims he saw Cubans with snakes wrapped around their arms, presumably to bite the police. "I gave the order to get shotguns ready. Several warning shots were fired. We were viciously attacked with rocks, pieces of board, railroad spikes, snakes, chunks." Five Cubans were shot, one in the stomach with a .357 Magnum (he narrowly survived), and many were injured in the melee that followed. They fled back into Fort Chaffee, where they set fire to some guards' shacks and barracks. Others formed a reactionary force, complete with improvised white armbands; they protected

American civilians and soldiers, helped put out the fires and clean up the refuse, and engaged in some vigilantism of their own. Said a U.S. marshal, "They helped us kick ass" among the troublemakers.

The press and local authorities called the incident a riot; the government insisted that it was less than that. Approximately 300 among more than 18,000 Cubans had left the base against the advice of their landlord, taken on the local police, and lost. No observer of that encounter doubted that the troopers, by blocking the refugees, had saved them from extensive mortal damage at the hands of the armed civilians a few hundred yards up the road. The mob had cheered at fallacious news of a Cuban's death, calling out for more; as the acrid smoke from the fires at Chaffee spread, more than a thousand gathered on the hill in the darkness, cursing the soldiers who blocked the highway. Many, according to the *Times Record*, "talked about the shortcomings of [President] Carter."

The incident made a deep impression upon the public, in Arkansas and elsewhere: all the Cubans were violent, anarchic, debased. The media only dimly perceived amid the charges and countercharges, the recriminations and buck-passing in Washington, that some basic dysfunction of government had occurred. That fact was soon papered over with press releases about increased manpower and security arrangements—concertina—at Chaffee, and reassuring statements that the soldiers there and National Guardsmen had at last been told to use their batons should they need them. Forgotten during the controversy were the Cubans themselves, most of whom had been badly frightened. America had accepted them out of a complicated mix of compassion and diplomatic advantage, but no one wanted ultimate responsibility for them. People in positions of power were more interested in protecting their own and their agencies' skins than in



providing for the needs of the refugees or of the people among whom they had landed. The deplorable irony of the Chaffee incident is that Cubans and local residents were provoked by ineptness of the same bureaucracy.

The new arrivals that September day were young and male. They looked groggy and distracted as they were herded into a room with signs on the wall saying, “*Bienvenidos a Fort Chaffee Ark*” and “*Mi casa es su casa*.” They were lectured in Spanish on the importance of behaving themselves and of learning English. Then they were photographed; assigned a barracks, a mess hall, and a Volag to handle their sponsorship; issued an ID card, a copy of *La Vida Nueva*, a copy of the Chaffee newspaper, a map of the United States, the rules of conduct, and a written explanation of why they were being held; and sent over to Building 1670 to get personal belongings that had been shipped in plastic bags.

The Cubans seemed completely obedient. When I mentioned this to the deputy district director of the INS, he picked up an empty cardboard carton and hurled it across the processing room. He had been sent to Chaffee by the INS to supervise consolidation and was feeling the tensions of a long, thankless ordeal.

Hardly a government agency involved with the Cuban refugee process had not suffered some political mortality, the INS and the White House included. The INS thought they had the last—and supposedly least desirable—Cubans under wraps, but could not be certain. In late September, U.S. penitentiaries contained 1774 Cubans known to have committed or strongly suspected of murder, rape, armed assault and robbery, sodomy, or violent misbehavior. At least 400 Cubans were undergoing psychiatric evaluation, and many would require permanent care.

Those left at Chaffee had few friends or family members in the United States, and few professional skills. Many had spent time in prison in Cuba for petty or political crimes, something they had admitted to INS officials even though, ironically, that admission decreased their chances of sponsorship. Undoubtedly many Cubans did not admit past criminal activity, and the Cuban government would not provide prison records. “We are adept at interviewing,” an INS spokesman had told me in Washington the week before. “We also had word-of-mouth to go on, and observation. Some of the refugees wore black shoes, which meant they could have come from institutions like prisons.” No one knew for sure about the other 115,000 Cubans already dumped into the open maw of America. However, almost all the Cubans sponsored early were sponsored by family members.

We returned to the press center, where I was

assigned a bi-ling, a slight, middle-aged, soft-spoken Cuban I shall call Alberto. He had been sponsored by an Army officer, but was staying on at Chaffee to work as a translator. Alberto wore a new tan ski parka and chain-smoked Trues. He told me he had been an electrician in Havana, but he seemed too well educated. Most Cubans I met identified themselves as electricians, chauffeurs, or solderers, professions they plainly believed most likely to win sponsors.

We were driven down to G-Pop in a task-force car and waved into the enclave by an enormous black FPS guard. Alberto said the Cubans had been surprised to see Negroes in America armed and in positions of authority. The flower seller I had seen the day before had returned to the barricades; next to him squatted another Cuban selling figures of sharks and turtles carved out of foam rubber mattresses and painted in garish pastels.

On closer inspection I saw that the Cubans wore a medley of tropical and American sartorial styles—Hawaiian prints, jogging suits, slogan-bearing T-shirts (“Go, Hogs!”), sandals, basketball shoes, raincoats, straw visors, tank shirts, culottes worn as a macho version of Bermuda shorts, down vests, crosses on chains, and the ubiquitous cat hats.

A crowd had gathered behind 1547, where the morning’s arrivals were being turned out into the general population, bedrolls under their arms. Alberto introduced me to a block leader, a black Cuban named Raoul who had found a sponsor and was leaving for Little Rock that afternoon. His clothes, he said, were being ironed in his barracks by a *si-si*—a homosexual. Two *si-sis* stood in conversation near the garbage can, one wearing yellow shorts and red knee socks, the other purple stretch pants; they went off arm in arm.

Alberto said, “They are . . . I forget the word. *Square?*”

He meant “queer.” I explained that the word was considered discriminatory and abusive in America, but he had difficulty grasping the notion. Homosexuality brings harassment and possible imprisonment in Cuba. It is culturally abhorrent to Cubans, running counter to the spirit of *machismo*. The manifestations of transsexuality were exaggerated at Chaffee, as they might have been in any such institution, but the straight men treated them with indifference rather than contempt. I saw many homosexual Cubans there, although the percentage was small. Two barracks had earlier been given over to homosexual men, and many had already been sponsored. But estimates of the total number of homosexuals arriving in the Freedom Flotilla were exaggerated in that fast-breaking story. Reporters failed to take into account that many of the young men had left wives at home. Homosexuals proved to be among the easiest to sponsor because they had few mental prob-



lems, and because homosexual organizations all over America immediately came forward to help.

Alberto stopped men at random, all of whom were willing to talk. A surprisingly large number admitted to having spent time in Cuban prisons. They had been classified as *peligrosidads* ("dangerous ones") by the Cuban government, even if their crimes were stealing bread or fishing without a license. A smartly dressed twenty-four-year-old named Serapio had stolen a horse and had been put in prison. His friend Papito had tried burglary, but was not very good at it. Neither he nor Serapio seemed dangerous. They were among the 22,000 Cubans discovered by the INS to have some sort of criminal record, but nothing serious enough to warrant imprisonment here.

While we talked, music poured from open windows where clothes hung from makeshift lines. I could see the dark torsos of men playing cards or watching the action in the streets and yards below. Others carried plastic plates piled with beef hash, black beans, rice, bread, and fruit from the mess halls.

I told Alberto I wanted to meet a black marketeer. He led me across 26th Street, the notorious "Boulevard" where, a few weeks earlier, prostitution and the selling of contraband reportedly had flourished, before the Park Police drove the operations back into the barracks. A wide assortment of weapons had been picked up during the sweep of the enclave. I doubted that Alberto could find his mark in the big, ambulatory crowd. "Here everyone knows everything," he said. I expected to meet a tough young operator offering drugs, liquor, and sex for a price, but was confronted with a sweetly smiling old man with a prunelike face.

He wore a Mack cat hat, a new parka with a scarlet down vest under it, and new espadrilles. He held a bouquet of artificial flowers given him by an arrival from McCoy—a prize, because the McCoy flowers had finer thread and larger petals than the Chaffee flowers.

"He can get you anything," Alberto said. "Pants made to order, good shampoo. He always carries a big roll of money."

Alberto asked him to produce it for the American's benefit; the old man turned out of his pocket three cents and a Bic lighter. Before I could ask a question, he handed me the flowers and moved off.

"He's smart." Alberto was disappointed with the performance.

We entered a barracks where I sat next to a young man balancing his lunch on his knees. He politely set the food aside and lit a cigarette; the other Cubans who gathered round also smoked, a nostalgic reminder of the time before the surgeon general's report, and reminiscent of American recruits in government issue waiting to be shipped out.

The walls were covered with pages cut from American magazines and pasted up in long, neat rows. There were a few nudes, but the majority of the women shown were boosting products such as Wisk, Virginia Slims, Black Velvet, Electrolux, Tareyton, part of an orgy of American consumerism. At night the Cubans went to sleep thinking about K-cars, shiny aluminum weather stripping, dog food, graphite spinning rods, plastic swimming pools, vegetable oil in aerosol cans, ten-speed bikes, refrigerators with water fountains built in, folding furniture, thermal underwear, electric hedge clippers, colored tissue, and instant coffee makers.

The young man spoke in grave, considered tones of fighting in Angola in 1975 with a Soviet automatic rifle. He said many Cubans volunteered to go to Angola in the hope of escaping to some country where there were no Russians, and no Fidel. He and one hundred other Cubans deserted, but were caught and shipped back to prison in Cuba as *peligrosidads*.

His account sounded rehearsed, but not fabricated. The Cubans had told their stories many times and had acquired a forbearance that was difficult to penetrate, particularly in translation. But the monologues were full of painful lapses following the mention of relatives, children, the deprived quality of life in Cuba, and expectations in America. Those born shortly before or after the revolution saw Castro not as a hero or a stern father figure but as a misguided pedant in thrall to the Russians. General agreement existed on two points: the Russians were the principal beneficiaries of the revolution, and they all smelled bad.

"Ah, *bolo*," said Alberto, a play on the word "ball"

and a nickname for the Russians. He held his nose, and the others nodded solemnly.

We went back out into the autumn sunlight. For every dozen Cubans in motion, a single man sat on a stoop or propped against a barracks, chin in his hands, waiting for something to happen. That something was sponsorship, a moral rather than a legal commitment by an American to provide the refugee with certain basic amenities: housing, food, clothing, and minor medical attention, as well as help in finding a job and in understanding U.S. laws and culture. For this the sponsor might receive, in a single payment, anywhere from nothing to \$300. Sponsorship was the imperfect end product of a complicated bureaucratic process that involved a leap of faith on the part of the Volags who sought to match sponsor with refugee. One of the untold stories of the Cuban refugee phenomenon was that many were rejected by their own families in the United States, not because they were dangerous but because they were vivid reminders of recent deprivation and threatened their sponsors with the loss of painfully acquired status.

Eighty-two thousand refugees, already sponsored, were living in Florida, mostly with family members; 62,000 were in Dade County alone. The only other sizable pocket of Cuban refugees was in the New York area, with about 10,000 refugees in the city and across the river in New Jersey. Arkansas had fewer than 300 sponsored Cubans living among the entire population.

The following evening I met Alberto at his barracks in G-Pop. A sympathetic member of the Public Affairs Office had secured for me access to the enclave after dark. We walked together across the Boulevard and up toward the parade grounds looking for a character known as Johnny Cash, a Cuban said to spend his nights searching for weapons among his countrymen. It was a mild evening, full of music, and Alberto was in an expansive mood. "Tonight," he said, "I show you everything."

He said he smelled rum, but all I could detect was the aroma of beans coming from the mess halls, and Alberto's omnipresent cigarette. Supper had been served and the Cubans were massed along the edge of Fourth Street. They stood six deep at the pay telephones. Floodlights mounted on poles created pools of unnatural brilliance in the gathering dusk; beyond the concertina, Chaffee seemed deserted.

A boxing ring was set up in the middle of the playing field with an electric light dangling above, though no fight was scheduled. A nearby barracks had been converted into a training gym; a soiled punching bag hung from the limb of a tree outside, the earth beneath it ground to dust. Alberto said that Cubans are fond of

boxing; the best fighters had already been sponsored by prospective managers. Bleachers at the far end of the field faced an outdoor movie screen where reruns of Ali's fights were to be shown. Next to the recreational center—one more barracks—tables and benches had been placed beneath a roof of corrugated iron. Disco music boomed from speakers inside the center, but those Cubans in the open air took little notice of it.

We found Johnny Cash riding shotgun in a task-force pickup. He stepped down and sauntered toward us, a short, wiry figure dressed entirely in black. He wore cowboy boots and a cowboy hat, and carried a shortwave in his back pocket. A heavy black moustache and a dearth of teeth lent Johnny Cash a comical mien. I had met him earlier, in a tiny room in the back of a task-force barracks where he slept during the day surrounded by stacked cases of Tab and Pepsi. He spent nights patrolling the enclave as part of the unarmed volunteer constabulary. I later realized that Johnny Cash was the volunteer constabulary.

He announced, somewhat uneasily, that he had found no weapons. Would the American journalist care to come to the task-force barracks for a Pepsi? Before I could answer, two Cubans leaned out of a second-story window, the room behind them suffused with a soft red glow, and motioned us up.

We climbed the narrow staircase toward a row of vigilant black faces. I expected to see some of the illicit action I had read about and which Alberto had said he would reveal. The front room looked promising, equipped as it was with a lamp with a scarlet shade, an electric fan, a couch, a hot plate, and a Waring blender mended with adhesive tape. Our host wore sunglasses and patent leather shoes; he was not, however, a pimp or a drug dealer but a cobbler who had recently been sponsored by the owner of a shoe factory in Brooklyn, and was on his way out. His name was Antonio and he was adept at getting the United States government to fly his possessions from one camp to another. He was also a barracks leader, which meant he was entitled to a private room and some amenities the other Cubans did not have.

The walls were decorated with the usual consumer cheesecake. Plastic coffee cups had been turned upside-down and glued to the ceiling at regular intervals; alternating with them were squares of toilet paper, geometrically arranged at precise angles, the edges glued. The effect of that subsistent, ingenious interior decoration, which moved in the breeze, was to soften the lines of a hard, mean cubicle. Antonio asked us to sit, and set a friend to making coffee in a no. 10 can. He turned down the volume on the radio and began to talk, in that dispassionate way I had come to recognize, of his wife, three children, two brothers, and three sisters still in

Cuba, all of whom he hoped to bring to America eventually. He had no prison record; he was just one of thousands of Cubans determined to get out.

Antonio's friend served coffee in cracked china cups, each containing a small, powerful portion. Cigarettes followed. Johnny Cash did not search for weapons, but sat politely on the couch next to Antonio's friend, who had been imprisoned in Oriente for stealing food, and who wore a button on his sweater that said, "I'm Learning English. Are You?" He and Antonio talked about the difficulty of obtaining enough protein for children in Cuba, where families were expected to exist on five pounds of rice a month and an ounce of coffee a week. A pair of trousers had to last through six months' continual wear. Food and clothing were very expensive on the black market.

I asked why they thought they had been brought to Chaffee after landing at Key West months before.

"To train for the invasion of Cuba."

We returned to the parade grounds, where several hundred Cubans sat in the bleachers or stood about on the grass watching Ali pummel Floyd Patterson. As usual, they were young and male. Of the 125,000 Cubans who came to Florida, approximately 60,000 were men between eighteen and thirty-five, about the same number of young males one would expect to find in a city of roughly one million population.

We crossed the street toward the disco. Through the open windows I could see massed bodies moving in constricted response to the music, swept by a strobe light. The three of us worked our way up the steps and into a crowd of several hundred packed into a room no more than sixty feet long. In the middle of the floor, four men danced with four transvestites wearing gowns or stretch pants, their faces made up and their glossy hair cut in pageboys. I saw two bona fide women—a pretty brunette in tight jeans, and a matronly prostitute I had seen several times in G-Pop. The rest were men. They moved slowly, never colliding—Cubans do not bump into one another unless they mean to—or they stood and watched, smoking, with elbows held against their bodies. Again I was reminded of the anonymous existence of recruits, the anxiety of waiting for a decision to be made elsewhere, and the loneliness.

“We the unwilling led by the unqualified have been doing the unbelievable so long with so little we now attempt the impossible with nothing.”

The words, printed on a sign in task-force headquarters outside the office of the director, were intended ironically. Don Whitteaker was loaned to State by Health and Human Services (HHS) because he had managed the encampment of the Vietnamese in 1975.

Whitteaker was credited with the skills required to juggle the various agencies involved; his objectivity was reflected in a statement that could have applied to some pockets of government as well as to the enclave.

“As you well know, this is not the real world. We provide all the services for these people. A person can decide he wants out, and develop a high frustration level, or he can settle in. Some like it here—they’re getting three squares a day, a place to sleep. They get reconciled to making the best of it.”

Dave Lewis, who ran the U.S. Catholic Conference sponsorship program out of a grubby barracks on Fourth Street, had a less genial view of Chaffee. His bloodshot eyes attested to a relentless process that so far had obtained release for 11,000 Cubans. “Some of the people here are inventing their own life-styles. If a refugee becomes static, or desperate, it can ruin the rest of his life.”

I asked him about the social misfits.

“The criminal aspect has been overplayed. I don’t try to hide from the fact that many need attention—some institutionalizing—but the percentage is small.”

The stockade, Level Two (a high-security area for suspected misbehavers), and the psychiatric ward were off-limits to the press. Nevertheless, I had made arrangements to interview the resident psychiatrist, Dr. Bolivar Martineau, at his office. At the last minute he changed his mind and met me at the press center, saying we would have been “bothered” if the interview had taken place at the psychiatric ward. Martineau, a Puerto Rican, was on loan from the National Institute of Mental Health to HHS, the agency in charge of medical facilities and the object of some criticism for conditions existing at the various camps, particularly limited care for chronic patients and limited security for mental patients threatened by other refugees.

Ninety-five patients were currently being treated at the psychiatric ward at Chaffee; the same number were outpatients among the general population. According to Martineau, an “undetermined element” was troubled and in need of someone to talk to, but did not necessarily need treatment or medication. In his opinion, in most of those cases a sponsor and release from the enclave would restore their equilibrium.

“They suffer from hysterical depression, anxiety from being uprooted and placed in a strange environment for an undetermined length of time. All they need is a good social support system. Others are culturally deprived, rather than mentally retarded. They stole something they considered essential—a chicken or a piece of clothing—and were classed as *peligrosidads*. Some of them may have been made insane after being thrown into asylums in Cuba. Regular psychotics are apparently treated well there, but people classified as politically deviant are not treated well.”

Unwanted Immigrants

Did those coming from Castro's Caribbean gulag account for the forearm-slashers at Chaffee, or the swallows of nails, screws, and plastic spoons?

Martineau shrugged. "I will say that it's a highly regressive way of getting even with authority . . . There are no more psychos here than in normal society."

The next morning the *Times Record* carried a front-page, six-column headline about two stabbings in the enclave. The incidents were less serious than they appeared—both victims had been stabbed in the arm, in squabbles arising out of consolidation—but when I arrived at Chaffee the press center hummed with reporters and photographers wanting access.

I had made arrangements to tour the periphery of Chaffee with the Border Patrol. The captain drove me through Jenny Lind and other outlying areas that were still fearful of the Cubans' presence. The curious fact remained that in hundreds of incidents involving walk-offs, only one Cuban had been convicted of a felony, auto theft. Other than the rock-throwing incident on June 1, no Cuban had committed an act of violence against an American. No murders had occurred on either side of the concertina.

My tour ended back at the enclave. A yellow school bus stood outside Building 1574, the assembled press viewing the arrival of the latest batch of refugees. Among the reporters was an attractive blonde from the local television station, KFSM. Her cameraman wielded his minicam as if it were an extension of his upper torso, trussed with the straps of identification tags, light meters, Nikons. His lens seemed drawn inexorably toward *si-sis*, one of whom was being questioned by Park Police. The Cuban's missing teeth and heavy eyebrow pencil looked grotesque. The burgeoning population within the enclave, and the publicity surrounding the stabbings, had put the police in a nasty mood; they glared at the refugees, and at reporters. The paddy wagon plowed up and down the Boulevard, a visible extension of Level Two and the stockade—symbols of oblivion for the Cubans.

A scramble call came over the Park Police radio: a violent act had been committed in a mess hall at the top of the enclave. Within seconds the cruiser and the paddy wagon were speeding down the street, forcing Cubans to leap aside. The press clambered aboard the bus, which lurched into pursuit. "This is great," said the blonde reporter, gripping a stanchion. She wore sunglasses, designer jeans, and bright red lipstick. "We haven't had any action in a long time. Now they're getting more people in. It's so much fun to cover this story. What ever happens in Fort Smith."

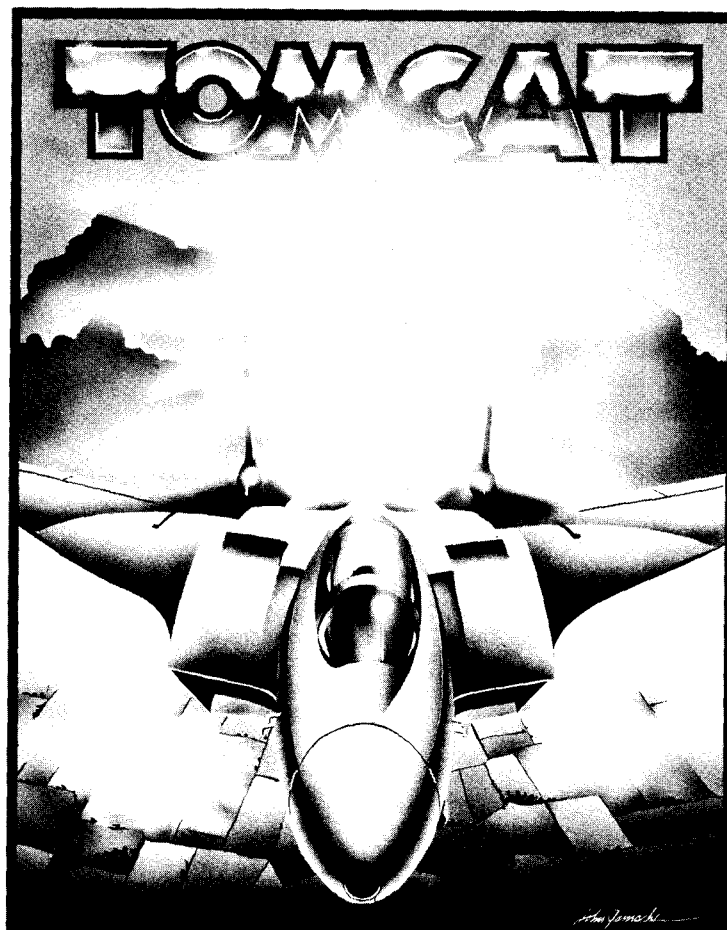
Her cameraman's press credentials fell to the floor. She retrieved them for him but he didn't thank her, so absorbed was he in the grim search for visuals. First off the bus, he directed the minicam toward the open doors and windows of the barracks, where Cubans had been drawn by the cruisers' flashing lights. Men who moments before had been eating their lunch, or day-dreaming, blinked at this American laden with video equipment; they smiled and shifted uneasily, the smiles fading as the camera moved on in search of something more interesting.

We were too late. The violent act had been a fist-fight; it had drawn the press bus, a task-force car, a ranking Public Affairs Office spokesman, a couple of bilingual soldiers, a paddy wagon, and six Park Police cars. One of the contestants had fled and locked himself in his room. We were told that the police had broken the window and hauled him away, first tossing his hat into a trash can. But nothing remained to photograph.

"If somebody threw my hat in the garbage," murmured one of the soldiers, "I guarantee you there'd be trouble."

A press escort offered to take me back to 1091. On the way out we passed the flower salesman I had seen the first day; I asked the escort to stop the car. I took the flowers from the Cuban and gave him the dollar he asked for; he stared at it as we drove away. □





A story by Jim Shepard

I could talk this to death, but it all comes down to this, really: He's the way he is and I'm the way I am. How much did he get from his father and how much from me? I can't agonize over that. If your kid's drowning, you don't worry about how he got in the water. You start swimming.

I'm a Grumman Industries multirole long-range intercepting ground-supporting F-14 swing-wing Tomcat with a Phoenix missile system and enough other shit tucked under my wings to obliterate Belgium, and I can outfly, out-track, outmaneuver, and just plain outshoot any other poor son of a bitch in the sky. I can hit a bogey 100 miles away on the run; I can fire six Phoenix missiles simultaneously and independently track eighteen other targets while I do it. I can fly faster, get higher, and turn quicker than anything else in the air and do it all in the densest countermeasure environments possible. When I come into a room, things stop.

First of all, I've had trouble with El for a long time—we had trouble with him as a baby; he used to scream in the crib—but never serious trouble. He quit Little League when he blew a double play—what was

he, eight years old?—threw his glove into left field, got up, left second base, and walked home. Which was, by the way, just like him: make an error, go home.

We had a week-long fight to get him to be ring-bearer at my sister's wedding, which almost fell through completely when he realized the girl who would be standing next to him was bigger than he was. Then one of the kids said something about his cassock and that was it—we didn't find him until after the ceremony, waiting in the car.

In the seventh grade, one of the sisters stood him up and asked him if he was ever, ever, going to learn how to diagram a sentence, and he got his coat and briefcase and walked out, with her still talking. Make an error, go home.

It's not just a matter of El needing a father, needing the discipline; I know El. I know he took Jeff's death very hard; I'm tired of being told that. We all did. That was three years ago. He's a big boy now. He's fifteen. And discipline didn't collapse when his father died. The family thought so, though, because for them that was the first sign of trouble, when he wouldn't go to the funeral.

Still, no matter how much I expected it or dreaded it, I was mad, I was crazy mad, when he wouldn't come

out to St. Michael's. I dragged him, really dragged him, out to the limousine, him kicking and screaming, me pulling and screaming, and I thought: I'm as crazy as he is, and dropped his legs. In front of the whole street, a final humiliation.

But that was it, really: it was everybody else I was worried about. Either way, he didn't go, as my mother put it, "to his own father's," so word was out: I couldn't handle El. I just stood there, my mother and Earvin crying, staring at the flower sprays, thinking I was a lousy daughter, a lousy mother, and a lousy family member. And Jeff was dead, which wasn't possible. Just wasn't possible.

Earvin was three then. I had a three-year-old who wouldn't stop crying and a twelve-year-old who didn't show up.

El never talked about it afterward. I'm sure it still bothers him. In a way he just hurt too much to go. And he hated the rest of the family.

As for this jet stuff, it came from his father. The big new project back then at Grumman was the Tomcat, and Jeff used to come home and tell us all about it and how and why it was going to outperform the other companies' jets. Northrop's, General Dynamics'; I still remember the names. It was a very big contract, I knew, so I tried to get as excited as he was, and he'd go on and on, he was so happy about what he was doing. El got so excited by it. Jeff insisted that it was the best jet in the world; they were making the best jet in the world. One night it became an absolutely flawless aircraft. No limitations. None? we asked. None.

El had the posters all over his room. There was one over his bed, a top view with the wings swept back and straight out, you know, like Da Vinci's drawing with the naked guy in the circle, and there was this huge one of the thing flying out of the sun, flying right out of the poster at you, with a giant "TOMCAT" written over it. Jeff let him put one of those in the front hall, too. Used to scare my mother to death.

He wanted the specifications. He wanted the capabilities. He wanted all the numbers, all the graphs and charts. He wanted a model of one, he wanted to see one, he wanted to ride one. Jeff took him to the first trials the Tomcat had—drove the whole way. El came back like he'd seen God.

That was the interest we thought would turn things around for him. It did. The rest of his life dropped away. Sports, the few friends he had left. And we tried not to worry. Engineer, we thought; at the very least, maybe he'll want to join the Air Force.

Now I can operate my radar, select targets and weapons and go from simple cruise to air-to-air combat to ground support so fast your head'll swim; my ordnance fires from my stick and my digital com-

puter automatically flashes flight, target acquisition, and firing data on the head-up display in the line of sight. For air-to-surface stuff everything's on the front panels and my radar gives me ranging and ground-mapping. I can put anything on a dime and do it in seconds.

The toughest thing for El was the way Jeff died: he just died, as El put it. He wasn't hit by a truck, or shot by a burglar; he just died. His father built Tomcats, his father threw a baseball hard enough to make his hand ache for days, and his father just died.

He always had trouble at school. Jeff's death might've made it worse; I don't know. I don't think so. He's not stupid. Everyone keeps telling me that over and over and I keep saying I know, I know. It doesn't do me any good to know it and it won't do him any good until he starts to apply it. It would go something like this: Ninety-something on a history quiz, El asks the sister why number whatever is wrong, she tells him, he disagrees. Later I hear it for a week: All history quizzes are stupid. Next time, no studying.

And yet he would agonize over report cards. He knew what they used to mean to Jeff; they used to go over them pretty closely after supper. Jeff congratulating here, asking about a drop there. First report card afterward, El had a string of Unsatisfactorys.

I never had to worry about him getting into drugs, or breaking windows, or stealing. He was never with anybody. I never knew *where* he was. After that report card, he wasn't at school, I know that. I worried and worried and argued and pleaded and asked nice and screamed, and the next day he'd leave for school and never get there. I'd take a morning off and take him all the way there and he wouldn't get there. They would watch him through the first period and he would disappear the second. They would watch him through the second and he would disappear the third. Truant officers came to the house. Nuns called. Neighbors stopped by. I lost my temper with all of them. Sister Eileen finally found him, found out where he was going: the library.

Unsatisfactory? At how many times the speed of sound? At what ceiling? Can an Unsatisfactory deliver a Sidewinder with a blast fragmentation warhead up somebody's exhaust jets in seconds? Can an Unsatisfactory go off a carrier deck blind and fully loaded in any kind of weather? I left it to a nun and a nun said I was Unsatisfactory, but what kind of helixes can that nun cut into the upper atmosphere, what kind of snap rolls?

Jim Shepard is teaching at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

I don't know where he would have been through all of this without Earvin. Thank God for Earvin. No matter what happened to him there was always Earvin to come back to. Earvin to talk to. He got Earvin the swings himself. I didn't even know he wanted them. After a bath Earvin would pad around in his powder-blue pajamas—for no reason; you know little kids—his pajama boots slapping on the kitchen linoleum. Cabinet doors would open and shut, the dog's dish would scrape around, and El would be up and out of his chair in the den, his finger holding his place in one of Jane's books of aircraft while he checked on his brother.

I think Earvin got us both over the hump after Jeff died. I needed it as much as El did.

El found me crying one night and just stood there, surprised, before going to his room. He came back and said C'mon, Ma, let's go out. He took me to a really nice Italian restaurant. We got all dressed up and got a sitter for Earvin and he insisted on paying for everything and on the way home we passed an empty public tennis court and he got a funny look in his eye and said Wait here, and disappeared, and when he came back he had two sets of rental roller skates. I still don't know where he got them; some place around there must stay open late. You're crazy, I said, and he said So are you, and we sat down right there on the court and took off our shoes and put the skates on, and went around and around in the dark, his jacket and tie flapping in the wind and the skates making that noisy, rolling sound. God, we laughed. He would do things like that. And he would have that floppy black hair and that silly grin, and you would just want to hug him.

I never did anything like that for him, ever.

Nobody helped him except Earvin.

The day Earvin got sick we both almost went crazy. He paced, he sat, he paced, he sat. I played *Pippin* on the stereo, and we sat, waiting to hear from the doctor. Earvin had had bad stomach pains that turned into worse stomach pains during the night. We just sat. The guy playing *Pippin* sang, *I've got to be someone who lives all of his life in superlatives*, and El said, "Good luck," watching the phone.

When they called back and said they'd have to keep him a few days for observation, they didn't like the look of things, El took off, and when he came back, well, he was a jet.

I went to some of the first trials and all sorts of generals and foreigners and politicians were there, and this big, flat, gray, twin-engined Tomcat just ripped up the sky over our heads. It just seemed to keep going up, up, its engines tiny little orange-white dots in front of the vapor trails, until it must've hit eighty thousand feet easy, and when it snapped over and into its dive it came down on top of us in seconds, and

came over our heads in a roll so fast with the sound following so loud that everybody was ducking, generals and politicians first.

So he's been gone two days now. We had one talk since; he called, he wanted news of Earvin. I told him to come home and he called me a "bogey."

My mother's over, my neighbors are over, my sister's over. Nobody has any ideas. I have a Dr. Hazlik's number to call when El comes back. Apparently he meets with groups of kids.

I don't know if he really believes he's a jet. He didn't drink jet fuel or try to take off down the driveway. He acted like a human being while he was here. He just said he was a jet. By way of explaining the noises he was making, the positions he was sitting. I didn't think he was being funny.

The people at the hospital have been alerted.

I operate constantly now in a dense countermeasure environment. So many things are being thrown up at me that I'm taxing even my own systems; using everything I've got just to keep operational. I'm twisting, rolling, spinning, dropping tens of thousands of feet in seconds, climbing back up higher than anything can follow. Surviving is no problem because nothing will bring down a Tomcat. Carrying out operations is.

I'm tired of people. Tired of skin and bones and hair and crying. I'm 61 feet 11 inches long. I'm 16 feet high. I'm 38 feet wide swept, 64 feet unswept. I can go past Mach II and I won't break down. I can be wing-loaded to 40-50 psf and I won't break down. I can do anything and I won't break down.

My mother says just relax. My sister says she has called in at work for me. My neighbors have all volunteered to take care of the dog while I visit Earvin. I had to be reminded about the dog. The dog did the reminding; he shit on the rug in the dining room. Earvin did some reminding too; he's in the hospital.

I don't know why El's a jet. How could I know? Maybe he likes it better than being a human being. No, I don't regret we got him interested in jets. It's a normal interest. If it wasn't that, it would be something else.

I'll wait at the hospital. My mother'll stay here, with the dog, in case he calls.

I've worried and worried and I'm almost all worried out. I think I'd just like something to happen. I don't know: maybe the nuns are right. Maybe sometimes you just have to have faith.

I'm chasing Earvin down and using everything I've got to find him. I cruise down the street and through the front doors evenly, steadily, banking around the corner, sailing down the hallway. I find the room

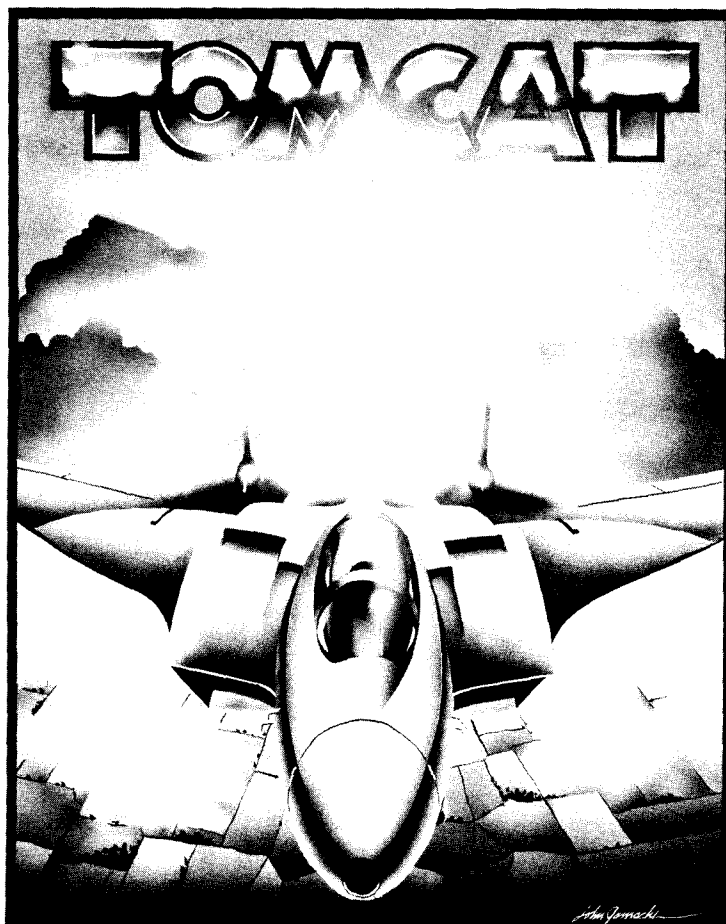
number and taxi into the elevator. The doors open on my mother in a chair in front of his room. All my underwing armament is showing, and as the doors widen completely I go to Mach II, past it, and I'm on her in an instant, my forward surfaces reaching the door as she tries to pull it shut behind her, banking, weaving, twisting, until I pop through and she recoils against the far wall as though we'd collided in our airspace.

I pitch and yawl toward Earvin, in bed, eyes wide, and my mother shouts "El" and grabs for one of my trailing surfaces, tipping me, swinging me, deflecting me off the near wall, a lamp jerking to the floor, but I pull out okay, my airframe intact, strong and undamaged. I'm away from the wall and after Earvin again and she's right on my tail, arms around my fuselage, and other arms are there too, pulling me down, my engines straining, my flaps giving all the lift they can. I'm too close to use the Phoenix or the Sidewinder; I can't get my nose around to use my cannon. I surge forward, pitching from side to side as the arms buffet and swing me, and she keeps yelling and I hear her feet pushing, sliding, as Earvin continues to stare, crying now, and suddenly my left wing drops and I slip and roll sharply and go down, slam-

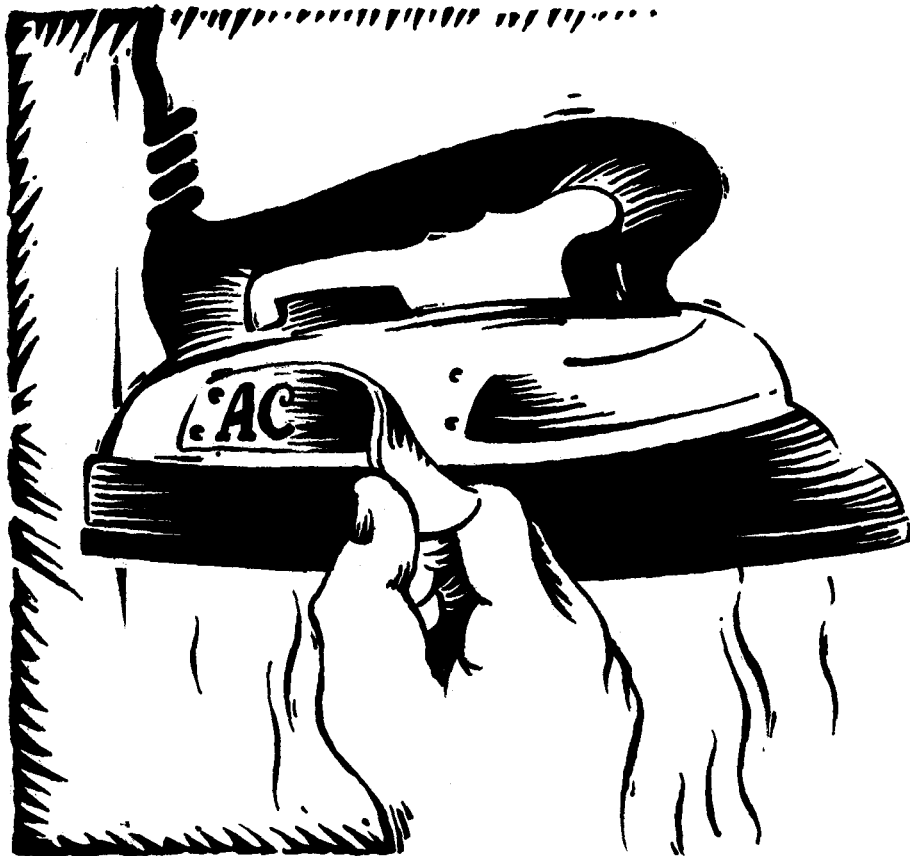
ming along to a stop next to the bed, everyone piling up behind and on top of me.

My mother shakes quietly, crying. "El," she says. Earvin peeks over the bed. I'm spread along the floor, down. I've been brought down. My mother slides further up, wrapping herself around me, heaving. A nurse behind her untangles herself. Earvin gets out of bed and crouches near, arms together between his legs. I reach out for Earvin so I can hold them both, and my mother starts to say Oh God and I say "I'm all right." She looks up and holds me tighter and Earvin slumps to his rear, bewildered, his legs splayed out. "I'm sorry," I say, and she makes a noise, and we all stay like that, connected. Miraculously, I realize, nothing detonated on impact: my Phoenixes nestle undamaged beneath a splintered, protective wing.

He's asleep now; he conked out right in my arms, sitting there, and he hasn't waked up since. I don't think he slept for three days. Earvin goes up and checks on him now and then, and, according to the latest report I got, he's on his back, snoring, his arms sometimes at his sides, sometimes straight out, just like the poster over the bed. □



LIFE & LETTERS



The Ward Essaymatic 5000

by Andrew Ward

I like to think of myself as someone to whom, in the short run, time doesn't mean very much. It's not that I've come to grips with my mortality or found solace in the infinite; it's just that I work at home and take my cues for meals and labor from my wife's departures and arrivals, my daughter's naps, and the noise the mail makes as it falls through the slot in my door.

But sometimes, when I've invited the Taplins for dinner at six or promised my brother that I'd call back at nine, I have to know what time it is. Since my wristwatch lies most often on the rim of my bathroom sink and is in any case of the limited-warranty drugstore variety, my most reliable source for the time of day is my telephone.

After a few turns of the dial I can reach, at any hour of the day or night, the recorded voice of a person I imagine to be a sprightly, gray-haired lady—

now dead, I've decided—cheerfully ticking off the remaining hours and minutes of my life. Her eternal recitation has the eerie quality of an all-night diner, but it's a courtesy of the phone company and gets the job done.

What bother me are the little prefaces the Time Lady delivers. "An energy-saving tip from the Phone Center Store—form car pools and combine trips" is her message at this moment (10:12), but I have heard her take swipes at letter-writing, hawk push-button phones, and remind me of far-away loved ones whom I haven't called in weeks (although she has shown a curious lack of concern for loved ones within my toll-free area whom I haven't called in weeks).

She is a fund of advice and information, but she has a somewhat scolding, Dr. Joyce Brothers little voice and I always hang up with a mortified feeling. In fact, sometimes I get so snagged on her pitches and tips, so eager to close my fireplace dampers or call my Aunt Mary Alice, that I forget to hear what time it is and have to start the process all over again.

I hate to sound ungrateful, but since the Time Lady is paid for out of the profits the phone company makes by overcharging for its other services, I tend to regard her as part of Ma Bell's product line, and as such she demonstrates to me once again the increasingly preachy and grudging manner in which business has taken to dispensing its goods and services. Promotion, which was once an antecedent to actual commerce, now survives each transaction and sticks to each product like flypaper. Indeed, I've lately gotten the feeling when I buy something that I've merely entered into a sort of joint ownership arrangement with its manufacturer and that what I like to think of as my possessions will always have their hearts back at the factory, like campers longing for home.

I've always resented the little logos that mar my appliances: "F/GM/Mark of Excellence/Frigidaire/Product of General Motors U.S.A./Imperial 170" on my refrigerator, "Sears Kenmore Magicord Powermate" on my vacuum cleaner. It sometimes seems to me, as I look around at the honky-tonk of my kitchen, that I've spent my money only to populate my shelves and countertops with ambassadors singing their companies' praises. Even now, as my typewriter taps out these words for me, it is advertising SCM's Smith-Corona Coro-

net Super 12, and in a far corner of the house my radio blows its horn for Sony.

Certain kinds of products have mysteriously escaped the chrome name plate and the Technicolor decal. Furniture, for instance, still functions purely as furniture, ungarnished by promotion. But I don't think it will be long before we'll see convertible sofas with "Castro" stitched into the upholstery or rugs with "Karastan" worked into the weave. Clothes were once off limits in this regard, but now people seem to get a warm, participatory glow from wearing Adidas T-shirts, Yves St. Laurent ties, or designer jeans with "Gloria Vanderbilt" emblazoned across their backsides.

Even the Post Office has started to put its dowdy wares to promotional use. This winter my godfather, a Dante scholar, rushed through a purchase of fifteen-cent stamps only to discover later that they were of a new variety no doubt devised to counter the Time Lady's attacks on written correspondence. Each of them was decorated with a floral generality and a motto: "Letters preserve memories," "Letters lift spirits," or "P.S. Write soon." The purchase thus transformed my godfather, of all people, into an involuntary press agent for the Postal Service. My godfather insisted in one letter that the stamps were the work of the Hallmark people. "Who else," he wrote, "but one—or a committee—of their hired poets could have conceived such sentiments?"

"And I can't afford to burn them," he wrote in a forlorn footnote. "One of them is affixed to this envelope."

Nor have the states been left behind. New York is now considering putting "I Love New York" on its license plates. E. B. White saw this coming, along with everything else, some decades ago when Maine stamped "America's Vacationland" on its plates, but I think New York has gone Maine one better. I don't believe states should be allowed to put anything on their plates other than the necessary letters and digits, but if that isn't possible, and it no longer seems to be, New York ought at least to make the plates adjustable so you could change "I Love New York" to "I Like New York" or "I Don't Mind New York" or "I Don't Like New York Very Much," depending on your mood. Otherwise they confuse the very meaning of "I"—something I'd like to keep straight as I trip along life's highway. I'm all for states' rights, I

guess, but I don't think states have the right to enforce our affection for them.

A day ago I walked into my baby daughter's room to get her up from her nap and found her standing in her crib and flashing me a strangely flawed and gaping smile. Upon investigating further I discovered that she had chewed the logo tag off one of her stuffed animals and was in the process of swallowing it. I hooked it out of her mouth with my finger and after I had calmed down a little I tried to explain to her that while the label was a good one, for we've tried to buy her nothing but the best, it was inedible and not worth dying for. But she gave me a bewildered look and slowly shook her head and I knew that Casey, like her brother before her, will someday don *Mork & Mindy* T-shirts and refer to life's necessities by their brand names.

Her father, however, hasn't given up the battle yet. You might think that I just like to bring up this stuff and not act on any of it or expect anyone else to act on it either. Well, you've got me all wrong. During the course of writing this piece I think I've finally found a cure for our sickly pride of ownership.

It turns out that many of these logos I've been complaining about are removable. The plastic SCM/Smith Corona Coronet Super 12 logo plate, for instance, came off without a hitch, and after a little light scrubbing with cleanser and a sponge you'd hardly know anything had been there. And all it took was a few quick turns of a screwdriver and the Sears Craftsman logo plate came right off my push mower. I haven't had quite as much luck with the GE/General Electric Toast-R-Oven decal on the door of my toaster-oven, but I'm working on it. The only real problem I've had is with the logo plate on the refrigerator door. I pried it off easily, but it left a long scab of glue which gives the refrigerator a sullen look.

Removing the logo plates has given most of my possessions a pleasing, abstract quality, but I think what I'll have to do in cases like that of my refrigerator door is devise my own logo plates to paste over the scars the old ones leave. I figure I could find somebody who'd fashion a few for me out of brass or chrome, and I've been giving their composition a lot of thought. To set a good example for industry, I think I'll leave my name out of it and have it read in simple little letters: "A poor thing, but mine own." □

February report on

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FAR FROM HOME

by Ouida Sebestyen

\$8.95 at your bookstore

LITTLE, BROWN

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

by Donald McCaig

February is the longest month of the year. The old snow on our remote West Virginia farm has changed to slush and gray ice and mud that can suck a rubber boot right off your foot. Whenever there's fresh snow, our dirt road is nearly impassable and we ferry feed and groceries in our ancient four-wheel-drive pickup. With so many lambs on the ground, feeding gets complicated and the free time between morning and evening chores gets short. We've been lambing since December, and the marvel of new birth has become another routine job.

In the fall, we can take real pleasure in a full freezer, neat woodpiles, the barn groaning with hay. We look forward to quiet winter evenings—reading beside the fire, doing a jigsaw puzzle, perhaps hooking a new rug for the living room. But, by February, we've done those things, and the prospect of one more quiet country evening can set my teeth on edge.

That's when city life looks good. My wife, Anne, and I imagine ourselves eating out in a nice little restaurant with wine and candlelight. We want to see a movie on a screen bigger than nineteen inches, measured diagonally. We dream about concerts, ballet, gallery openings, dancing. We long for what Anne calls "life in the fast lane."

Harrisonburg, our shopping town, is only forty miles away, but bad roads and mountains make for a slow trip: an hour and a half one way. When lambs are coming, we rarely go there together, but this particular morning we decided to chance it. The two ewes we'd been expecting to lamb did so, considerably, at 6:30 A.M. A good single, and twins. Most of our ewes twin, some single, and occasionally a ewe will drop triplets.

The ewe due to lamb next was Bouncer, a big young Rambouillet, who had proved her mothering ability the past year. She wasn't showing any signs of hurrying into labor. She wasn't pawing herself a nest, or walking aimlessly about, or licking her lips, or separating herself from the flock. A neighbor promised to check Bouncer at noon, so we took off.

The trip in was pleasant; we made good time and stopped for chili dogs at

Jess's Quick Lunch, not exactly the candlelit restaurant I had dreamed about.

We had a noontime appointment with our income tax preparer. Mrs. Peters is very sharp, but new to the area and to farm accounting. When we sat down, I was nervous, expecting the worst possible news. I chattered about the weather, which was supposed to turn cold and windy.

She asked if we had more lambs when the weather changed. She had been talking to a dairy farmer who always got his calves during sudden cold snaps. He claimed stress brought on labor.

I said, "That hasn't been our experience. Oh, when the weather's very bad, we check the ewes every couple of hours because newborn lambs are so fragile. When it's below zero, if a newborn isn't up and nursing within twenty minutes, he'll freeze to death. But I haven't noticed more lambs coming during bad weather."

Anne thought the dairy farmer was probably right. "It makes sense to me. Stress can start the contractions."

Pleasantries concluded, Mrs. Peters gave us the news about taxes. It wasn't as bad as I had feared. So I was in a pretty good mood as we did our shopping. We picked up groceries, milk replacer (for orphan lambs), and an order of vet supplies for a neighbor. Outside the Farmer's Co-op, I eyed a display of fruit trees: apple, pear, peach, and cherry trees with green plastic wrapped around their root balls. I'd been meaning to plant an orchard for years. Maybe this year . . .

It started to get colder as the truck ground up the steep curves of Shenandoah Mountain, but the scudding clouds overhead didn't look like snow. As soon as we got home, I checked the lambing yard. Bouncer stared at me placidly, a wisp of hay hanging out of her mouth.

I said, "Bouncer, you should probably go right ahead and lamb. You'll like it inside the barn. Besides, ewes with lambs eat better."

Bouncer didn't comment; she stuck her head back into the hay feeder.

The dozen ewes in the lambing yard were older commercial sheep. Some

were Rambouillets (white-faced, long-wooled ewes), some had the black head and short fleece of the Suffolk breed, and some were crossbreds with dusky, speckled faces. They were big ewes—150 to 180 pounds—and all of them were experienced mothers.

We unloaded our provisions and started feeding the different groups of sheep. In the west, the sky was a pale, brilliant blue. The wind was starting to come up. I hauled water to the barn for the ewes with lambs and quickly checked all the lambs for health by sticking a finger in their mouths. If a lamb is healthy and nursing, the mouth is warm. But if a lamb's mouth is cold, you had better do something right away.

We feed hay off the back of a two-wheeled cart. As soon as I broke a bale open, the wind rolled and scattered it. It was work to pull the big field gates closed, but even when Anne said she had tied the barn doors with baling twine because of the wind, I didn't worry. Our farm lies across the bottom of a long, narrow valley. It's a natural wind tunnel and we've had high winds before. You get used to the tin roof shaking and rattling and the creak of house timbers.

The thermometer outside stood at ten degrees. No big deal.

I poured myself a cup of coffee and sat down to watch Walter Cronkite. Anne pulled off her high rubber boots and put on her slippers.

"The sheep hate that wind," she said. "Did you see how spooky the ewes were?"

The forecast was for gusts up to fifty miles an hour, but I pushed more wood into the stove and the house was very warm.

"I'll do the dishes if you cook," I suggested.

"Fair enough."

It was a good dinner, too: pepper steak, baked potatoes, and peas. The howling outside made the house seem especially snug, and we settled in for a quiet evening. Anne had her feet up, waiting for her favorite TV program, *M*A*S*H*, which came on at 8:30.

"I'm going to take a bath," I said. "I'll do a quick sheep check before I get in the tub."

"If you want to. I checked an hour ago and nobody was doing anything. Bouncer will probably wait until morning."

"Yeah, well . . ."

I put on my down vest and wind-breaker and took the heavy sealed-

beam flashlight. The lambing yard is only twenty feet from the house, and I had just stepped outside when I heard the familiar nicker of a ewe to her newborn lamb. It's a lovely sound, a soft *uh-uh-uh*, and it made me smile. I thought, "Well. We're not done for the night after all."

As soon as I opened the lambing-yard gate, I spotted her. The frantic mother, a big Suffolk, was trying to rouse her lambs—she'd had triplets—but they were all flat on the ground, motionless as boards. I ran back to the house and shouted, "Anne! Come quick!"

The ewe had done her best: she had cleaned each lamb as it came, and had tried to nudge them to their feet, but they were down now—muddy, bloody, and stiff. I wiped the birth mucus off their faces and forced my finger into their mouths. Cold. Ice cold. One lamb's

births are hereditary in sheep, these were very special lambs.

Anne was drawing medicine into a syringe as I plunged the worst lamb into the warm water. Its long, floppy ears were frozen into wings and I was afraid I might break them. When the lamb touched the water, it turned black and slimy. Anne was talking to the others as she injected them with AA1000 (a mixture of B vitamins, glucose, and electrolytes). As she slid the needle into their icy flanks, she was crooning, "Come on, honey. You can live. You can breathe now. *Hey, this one is breathing!*" And she brought both her lambs to the double sink. I was trying to fill the other side but couldn't find the stopper, and the warm water cascaded down my lamb's sides. Its eyes were half open, but slowly its eyelids slid closed.

"Quick. Give this one a hit." Anne's



ribs heaved with breath, and he was using his last strength to lift his heavy head a few inches off the ground.

Anne was beside me now. We scooped up the filthy, frozen lambs in our arms, hurried back to the house, and laid them beside the wood stove, just six inches from the hot metal.

"Quick," Anne snapped, "get some warm water in the sink. Don't make it too hot." She was slapping at their sides, rubbing them down with a lambing towel. It looks a little rough, but you have to get the circulation going.

For triplets, they were very big: close to ten pounds each. Since multiple

deft hands slipped the needle into the folds of loose skin over the ribs.

"I'm giving her three cc's," she said. "Is it a her?"

"I haven't looked. Yes. I can't use this sink."

"Use the sink in the bathroom."

The lamb overflowed the shallow basin of the bathroom sink. I cradled her head just above the filthy water and splashed water on her fine pointy nose to dissolve the strands of frozen mucus still clinging there. I held her up to my ear. Her eyes were closed and she wasn't breathing, but something tapped faintly inside the chest cavity.

"I'm done in here," Anne called. She swept into the living room with two thoroughly drenched lambs and an armload of the towels we use for lambing.

"I've got to try mouth-to-mouth," I said as I moved back to the deep sink again.

A lamb's muzzle will fit completely into a human mouth, so you can blow into the nostrils and mouth at the same time. Holding the lamb in the water, I enclosed its muzzle and puffed, took a breath, pressed its rib cage for the exhale, and puffed again. A lamb's lungs are smaller than a human baby's. It doesn't take very much air to fill them. Gently, gently. Puff, breathe, press, puff, breathe, press. The lamb's muzzle was still icy cold. The air from her lungs tasted strange but clean in my mouth.

The warm water had brought my lamb's body temperature up, but she wasn't breathing on her own. Anne came in and added more hot water. "How is she?"

When I drew back, the tiny mouth opened. The bright red tongue came out a quarter-inch and retracted. "Can't tell. Either she's got some spark still left in her, or she's started her death spasms."

Puff, breathe, press, puff, breathe. No obstructions in her air passages, and it didn't feel as if I was pushing air into her stomach.

When I pulled her out of the water, her eyes stayed closed, she was totally limp, but her sides heaved convulsively, once, twice. She settled into a regular breathing pattern. "Hey! All right!" I yelled, and carried her in to lie on the towel beside her brothers. Two wet ram lambs and one wet ewe lamb. Anne and I knelt side by side, rubbing life into the newborn. Both of us were nattering heedlessly.

"Their mother can't raise triplets," Anne said.

"Why not? She's a big ewe."

"She had mastitis last year. She's got only one teat."

The two ram lambs were wriggling around, trying to sit up straight. The ewe lamb lay still. I slapped her face, rubbed briskly, and promised her the sun, moon, stars, and a good mother if she'd just open her eyes.

"I'll bet their mother is going bananas," Anne said. I pictured the mother, bleating and tearing around the yard searching for her missing babies. But when I stepped into the yard, I

couldn't hear the ewe. Some sheep were peacefully pulling hay out of the feeder. A mother was nickering to a newborn.

Very quickly, I understood why the Suffolk wasn't hysterical about her lost lambs. She had found another one. That it wasn't hers didn't matter. I found two ewes nickering and nuzzling a big white single lamb who was sitting up comfortably, receiving the attentions of two mothers' tongues. When I checked the lamb's mouth, it was warm. He was in the lee of the feeder and the wind wasn't getting to him.

As I came through the kitchen, I said, "We've got another one. We can put him on hold for a while."

Anne had one lamb in her lap, trying it with a bottle. She had heated a mixture of colostrum and milk replacer, and was nudging the lamb's lips with the bottle.

My weak ewe lamb had her blue eyes open. I christened her "Lazarus."

Anne went outside and brought the other newborn back with her. When I'd seen him, he'd been as clean and white as a pearl. Now he was muddy, gasping, and half frozen. We got a fresh towel and went to work. Apparently, one of his mothers had got him up to nurse, but when he wobbled away from the windbreak, the wind had dropped him like a stone.

"He's big."

"Must go fifteen pounds."

One white lamb and three blackfaces, side-by-side on a crimson towel. Anne was working all of them, teaching them how to nurse. When a weak lamb first finds its suck, it's as though an electric shock passes through it. One can almost hear the lamb say, "Aha! So that's the idea." And it changes from a fumbling, passive creature into a torpedo, each muscle working to support the primary urge: *more milk!*

As they began to stand, we moved them into the front room, where the rug gave them better footing. They stumbled around, bleating and searching the corners. When they ran into each other, they would drop to their knees and try to nurse each other's ears. By 10:30, we had one lamb tangled in the fireplace screen, another trying to nibble a lamp cord, and enough noise for a zoo. Big White had a tremendous *baaa*, Lazarus a squeaky bleat.

It's always chancy pulling brand-new lambs off their mothers. The bonding process, in which the mother recognizes the lamb as her own, is fairly delicate, and sometimes, when the process is dis-

turbed, the ewe will refuse a lamb and let it starve or even butt it to death in the lambing pen. You can raise lambs on bottles, but they never do as well as lambs raised by a good mother.

Ewes recognize their lambs by scent, but we had washed all the scent off the triplets. Anne eyed the clumsy, healthy lambs. "Fine," she said. "Now we have four lambs and two mothers that both want the big white one."

We would have to try and graft one of the triplets onto Big White's mother. The Suffolk could raise two lambs on one teat. Perhaps the ewes were so confused by now that they wouldn't know one lamb from another.

By 11:30, the lambs were strong enough to go outside. The wind had died down. We each carried two lambs. As soon as the ewes heard them, they went crazy, calling for the lambs, rushing back and forth. They were like woolly gunboats circling us, trying to get to the lambs, and when we stepped into the barn, all the other ewes, suddenly awakened and alarmed, started calling for their lambs. We laid the lambs in the straw of the lambing pens. The lambs found it hard to walk in the deep straw and weren't too certain of their direction, but they were in fine voice. The ewes fell silent. Reserving judgment, they extended their noses to sniff the lambs. With a soft nicker, and a swipe of her rough tongue, the Suffolk owned two lambs and resumed the job that had been so rudely interrupted. Big White's mother welcomed him right away but sniffed the grafted newcomer suspiciously. You could practically see her thinking, "Two lambs? But I'm almost sure I had only one lamb. Almost sure . . ." Then Lazarus let out a particularly lusty cry and the ewe accepted the stranger and nudged her back toward her milk.

When Anne checked at one A.M., the lambs on the Suffolk had learned to take turns on her one functional teat.

When I went out at three, all four lambs were asleep, banked up against their mothers. There's nothing so smug as a lamb with a full belly. When I put my finger in Lazarus's mouth, she bleated in outrage.

When Anne went out at five, all the lambs were fine and Bouncer promptly presented her with two new ones. An effortless, routine delivery. Bouncer's lambs were up and nursing while she was still cleaning them off.

Later, over breakfast, Anne laughed. "Life in the fast lane," she said.

DR. ELIOT'S FIVE-FOOT SHELF

by Francis E. Wylie

The Harvard Classics must be classics indeed. For seventy years, while other sets of books have come and gone, Dr. Eliot's famous Five-Foot Shelf continues to sell, even though it has shrunk from its original six feet and one inch to its present two feet, two and three-eighth inches—the space available beside television sets in compact homes.

People at Harvard University tend to be apologetic about the Classics, explaining that a publisher took advantage of an aging Charles W. Eliot in the last year of his presidency. But voluminous files in the Harvard archives show that Dr. Eliot was fully aware of what he was doing. Publication of the books was approved by the corporation and the Harvard shield, with its magic VERITAS on three open books, is still emblazoned on each volume.

Although Dr. Eliot was seventy-four years old when he agreed to assemble the Harvard Classics, he was a man of physical and intellectual vigor. He climbed stairs two at a time and rode his bicycle before breakfast. At his summer place at Northeast Harbor, Maine, he sailed strenuously.

In 1908 Dr. Eliot submitted his resignation, effective the following year, ending a presidency of forty years, during which he had transformed Harvard from a venerable college into a great university and had set new standards for excellence in scholarship.

By coincidence, P. F. Collier & Son Company had decided in 1908 to publish a set of the world's best literature. Peter Fenelon Collier was an unlikely man to team up with the austere Dr. Eliot. He was an Irish immigrant who had prospered by selling books on the installment plan and had started a magazine, called *Once A Week* before it was renamed *Collier's*, to offer as a premium. He also began publishing books.

William Patten, manager of the Collier book department, had noticed a statement by Dr. Eliot that a five-foot shelf of books could provide a liberal education. He suggested to Norman Hapgood, editor of *Collier's*, that they try to get the Harvard president to edit a five-foot shelf of the world's best literature.

"Not a chance in the world," said Hapgood, a Harvard alumnus familiar with Eliot's reserve and the university's wariness of commercial exploitation.

Nevertheless, Hapgood and Patten arranged to meet with Eliot at the Harvard Club in New York, and there they made their proposal, doubtless emphasizing the opportunity for public education on a large scale. Eliot's fee would be \$5000, substantial for that time but hardly dazzling. The president was probably more impressed with the challenge of a second career and with the vision of educating Americans, for which he had great zeal. He promised to think about the proposal, returned to Cambridge, and wired acceptance.

The task was formidable. Collier wanted to publish the set in 1910, so most of the collecting and editing of manuscripts for some 23,000 pages would have to be done in 1909. Eliot engaged Harvard professor William Allan Neilson (later president of Smith College) to work on details, and set up an office in the Cambridge home of his son, Samuel A. Eliot.

Dr. Eliot's hope was to have all the most important epochs represented in the Harvard Classics. Neilson made an outline of the world's history on large sheets of paper and then he and Eliot filled in blank columns with their choices of authors. In an interview nearly two decades later, Neilson was asked if Eliot read everything that went into the Five-Foot Shelf. "Good heavens, no!" was the reply. "He couldn't." And neither did Neilson.

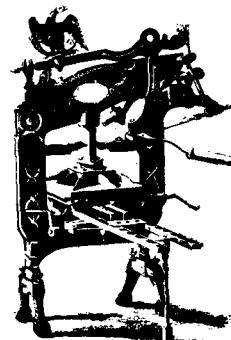
But both were humanists who had ranged widely in their reading. Eliot was well grounded in the Greek and Latin classics. Professionally he was a chemist who had resigned from the Harvard faculty after being repulsed in his attempt to reform the teaching of chemistry by letting students do laboratory work. Subsequently he joined the faculty of the newly founded Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where his plan of reform was welcomed and set the pattern for chemistry teaching throughout the country.

Being a scientist, Eliot chose for the Five-Foot Shelf writings of such great

Howard H. Peckham

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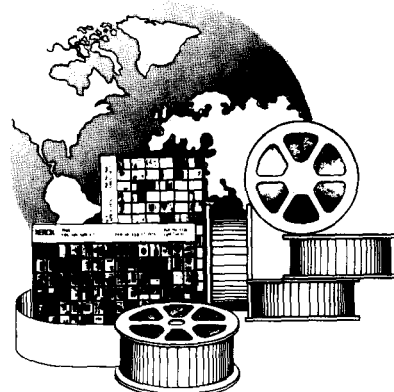
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scientists as Faraday, Kelvin, Harvey, and Pasteur, plus two volumes from Darwin, *Origin of Species* and *Voyage of the Beagle*, which a literary sort of editor might have overlooked. The *Journal of Quaker John Woolman* appealed to his Unitarian taste. Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* and Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* (the latter a somewhat tedious historical novel, which few Americans read today) were books that he had enjoyed in his youth and he included both. The selection of a complete volume of poems by Robert Burns and nothing by Melville or Hawthorne is an indication of how judgments have changed in the past seven decades.

Neilson was a professor of Elizabethan literature, but he was worried about how the public would react to the bawdiness of seventeenth-century drama. Eliot wrote to him from Maine, where he was vacationing: "If you take the smut out of the obscene passages in the Elizabethan drama will they not be left flat and unintelligible? The supposed fun was in obscenity. Voltaire says, 'We don't laugh in reading a translation.' Will anybody be able to laugh at any part of an expurgated Elizabethan drama?"

So, in spite of 1909 decorum, a whore remained a whore and talked like one in the plays of Ben Jonson and other Elizabethans.

Collier people interfered very little, but when Hapgood learned that Eliot planned to reprint novels by Dickens, Thackeray, and Scott, he argued that the inclusion of such well known books "will diminish our ability to sell sets."

Eliot wrote to Neilson: "Hapgood was here and I agreed to leave out *Guy Mannering*, *David Copperfield* and *Henry Esmond*. It is rather a relief to exclude modern fiction altogether. I have felt a strong inclination to put in more fiction; but the choice of the novels was evidently going to be hard to make wisely." A decision had been made to include no living authors, so Mark Twain, probably the most widely admired American writer, would not be represented.

There was a bit of a flap at the Collier office when it was discovered that Eliot wanted to reprint Frederick Law Olmsted's revealing report *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1856). Hapgood protested, and Mark Sullivan of *Collier's* wrote to Eliot: "The inclusion of this book will set civilization in the South back ten or fifteen years."

The book that would have been offensive to southerners was not used.

Eliot solicited advice from some of Harvard's most brilliant faculty members. He asked Hugo Münsterberg, the famous psychologist, for guidance on German literature. The professor objected to *Faust*, saying that the first part was "immoral and repelling" and that the second part "would be just as indigestible as the other most famous book of Germany, Kant's *Critique of*



Pure Reason." He recommended Schiller's *William Tell*, a suggestion that was accepted, but *Faust* stayed on the list. Kant was represented by a treatise on the metaphysics of morals—as a "tonic."

William James gave counsel on Mill, Schopenhauer, Hume, Locke, and Berkeley, and wrote to Eliot: "I advise you to think no more of Fechner. His psychophysics are unliterary and his other works are not yet classic." Fechner was dropped.

In the spring of 1909, Collier sent an announcement of plans for the Harvard Classics to all Harvard alumni, hoping, of course, to get subscriptions and build prestige for the set among opinion leaders, but also, no doubt, to defuse possible objections to the use of Harvard's great name for commercial purposes. Each sheet of paper for the books would bear the watermark "Eliot," the announcement said, and

the binding would be in Harvard crimson. Frontispieces would be designed by Maxfield Parrish, whose idyllic paintings were a regular feature in *Collier's* at that time.

In this announcement, Eliot explained: "It is my belief that the faithful and considerate reading of these books, with such rereadings and memorizings as individual taste may prescribe, will give any man the essentials of a liberal education even if he can devote but fifteen minutes a day."

Eliot's selections were not listed in the advance mailing to alumni. They had not been completed, but a preliminary list had been prepared for Collier salesmen. This list was on file in an office that Collier had opened in Cambridge.

On the night of June 15, 1909, someone from the *Harvard Crimson* filched the secret list from a locked desk, and the next day it was published in the student paper—the literary scoop of the year. The *New York Times* and many other newspapers picked up the hot news and published it June 17 on page one, thereby setting off a nationwide controversy over the wisdom of the selections.

Newspapers did their best to heat up the controversy and make a contest out of the selection, seeking dissenting opinions throughout the country. In Houston, Texas, the president of Baylor University declared that the shelf should include a grammar, a dictionary, the Bible, and a collection of Mark Twain's writings. He commented: "I am decidedly of the opinion that a liberal education cannot be found in sixty inches of plank." A Vermont clergyman objected to the choice of Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*, saying, "It is magnificent but it is not Virgil." His own translation would be more suitable, he thought.

The controversy paid off. William Patten recalled, years later, that "The free publicity the Harvard Classics received during 1909 and 1910 was beyond anything ever known before in publishing circles. At one time my clerks reported to me that we had pasted up in scrapbooks a total of over 1700 columns of newspaper free publicity."

Abbott Lawrence Lowell had assumed the presidency of Harvard in May of 1909. Commencement on June 30 was the occasion for ceremonial farewells to Eliot, who received honorary degrees of LL.D. and M.D. That night, after the festivities were over, Patten

sat with him in the yard of his new house on Brattle Street and chatted in a relaxed way. Patten later related:

"I asked him if he had very much minded the newspaper comment and free criticism with which the newspapers were teeming. There was an amused twinkle in his eye, and the corner of his mouth lifted a trifle as he replied, 'I suppose it was good publicity!' Wise old sophisticate!"

The official announcement of publication was made in the *Collier's* of April 23, 1910, with a one-page article by Dr. Eliot headed "The Harvard Classics, The Thought of the World Recorded in a Single Group of Books and a Definitive Statement of its Purpose and Scope." A coy editorial in the same issue planted a sales message, without mentioning the Five-Foot Shelf, by referring to a journalist who read *Hamlet* before arising. "Of course we do not believe in reading in bed," it declared, "but we do believe in a plan of using great thoughts to set one's brain in motion. The early morning is no time to fritter. Then is one of the best hours for PLATO, DANTE, MILL or EMERSON."

The next issue of *Collier's* carried a eulogy to Mark Twain, who had just died, and a large advertisement (sharing the page with one for Paris garters) for the Harvard Classics, "A Library of Liberal Education," which could be bought on "easy terms . . . at nominal cost." Shrewdly, Collier did not disclose the price or contents of the set, preferring to build up a mailing list from responses to the ad and then make a hard sell. Very soon Robert J. Collier, son of Peter, was able to write to Dr. Eliot:

"Roughly, we have sold 6,000 sets of the \$2 edition; and the Library edition which is only just out at \$49 for the 50 volumes has already sold 4,000 sets. By the end of this year, unless I am mistaken, we shall have sold over 30,000 sets."

Indeed, the Harvard Classics continued to sell, and many a family enshrined them in a new golden oak, glass-fronted bookcase beside the player piano which was supplanting the parlor organ. They rescued the Collier Company from a financial crisis.

By 1930, Collier had sold 350,000 sets—a total of 17,850,000 volumes. Statistics on sales since then are spotty. Crowell Publishing Company bought Collier in 1919, merged with it

in 1934, and formed Crowell-Collier Publishing Company in 1939; Crowell-Collier merged with Macmillan, Inc. in 1960. In 1969 the company mounted a mammoth mail-order campaign for a new "Great Literature Edition"—a "Deluxe Edition" of twenty-two volumes (later twenty-five). Much of the heavy philosophy was dropped, and so were such books as *I Promessi Sposi* and *Origin of Species*.

In 1973, the Harvard Classics were sold to Grolier, Inc. of Danbury, Connecticut, a company that turns out books the way Danbury hatters used to turn out hats when everybody wore one. Grolier offered the Classics (the first volume ABSOLUTELY FREE) at \$4.98 a volume, along with such nonliterary classics as *Mechanix Illustrated How-To-Do-It Encyclopedia* and *Disney's Wonderful World of Knowledge*. The price has since gone up to \$9.95.

Because Grolier is a publishing house, one supposes it has some literate staff members. About the only information that could be pried out of the company consisted of a list of the titles, typed by an illiterate who surely had never seen the Harvard Classics at home or at school. The list had some quaint spelling—"Marloe, Runyan, Tensyon and Thackery." But a startling item was the title for Vol. 23: "Writings-Confusion."

Confucius say: "Breadth of reading and the ties of courtesy will also keep a man from error's path" (see Hvd. Clcs. *Sacred Writings*, p. 39).

Alas, Dr. Eliot, your dream of universal education has not been fully realized! You and Confucius and Bunyan tried to show us the path to wisdom, and we pilgrims seem to have made little progress. But you laid up great treasures for us, and if they survived Harold Bell Wright, surely they will outlive Norman Mailer. Let us now read Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* for a perspective on mountebanks! It's worth more than fifteen minutes.

SHORT REVIEWS

THE LIFE OF JOHN O'HARA
by Frank MacShane
Dutton, \$15.95

One can certainly argue with Frank MacShane's assertion that the best

work of John O'Hara places him among "the half-dozen most important writers of his time," but there is no question that it holds a special place in American literature. It consists of some forty short stories and a few novels out of the dozens that he published between the Depression and his death in 1970, and it seriously considers, with what MacShane terms "artistic delicacy and . . . psychological acuteness," the limiting social and sexual values of our society.

As MacShane portrays him, O'Hara was a man whose essential gentleness was constantly at war with his need to prove himself. The son of a small-town doctor, he could not wait to reach the larger world of New York, where he gained experience as a newspaperman, and later Hollywood. But Pottsville, Pennsylvania, was not so easily left behind, and throughout the critical acclaim for *Appointment in Samarra*, the successful production of *Pal Joey*, and the popularity of *Ten North Frederick* and *From the Terrace*, O'Hara suffered from an overwhelming desire to be acceptable. In late years he succumbed to snobbery and self-promotion, and his reputation declined in direct proportion to his efforts, often half-formed, to put his conflicts into fiction.

MacShane is sympathetic but not indulgent toward these difficulties, just as he is toward O'Hara's work. Admitting that O'Hara wrote too much and too quickly, he nevertheless makes a convincing case for the writer's strengths: a genius for dialogue, a gift for characterization, and a deep compassion for individual pain. Despite his occasional lapses into easy generalizations and neologisms, MacShane does O'Hara a great service: he makes the books sound interesting, and worth reading again. Illustrations, notes, bibliography.

OTHER PEOPLE'S WORLDS
by William Trevor
Viking, \$10.95

Other People's Worlds is a deceptively low-key and unusually acute novel about the corruption and subsequent destruction, in one way or another, of innocents. From nice, widowed Julia, whose psychic deflowering dominates the book, to Francis, the pathologically untruthful actor she is about to marry, its characters find their lives twisted out of true by the random intrusion of other people and their baggage of personality. Illusion is rampant; its loss,

bitterly fought and more bitterly conceded, begets despair. For the strong, such as Julia's clear-witted old mother, there is hope. But the vulnerable, left alone with themselves, find only a few paths to take, and most of those lead to more destruction.

Despite the obvious seriousness of this theme, *Other People's Worlds* is often broadly funny and always full of a delightfully deadpan irony. A particularly unattractive child, dull and delinquent at twelve, is named Joy; Julia's mother finishes reading *Martin Chuzzlewit* and moves on to *Bleak House*. Such little touches, deftly inserted and seemingly insignificant, are typical of William Trevor, whose considerable talent lies in putting together the tiny everyday details of speech and action that define and reveal individuality. His characters are never types, though he is able to portray people of every age and background; even the despicable Francis, whose charm and good looks successfully mask a moral impotence that takes advantage of the goodness of others, is revealed to be complex, wounded, and capable of genuine feeling. In fact, Trevor is such a fine writer, so at home with his craft, that his "good" characters are as fascinating as his "bad" ones—a rare achievement.

THE BOOK OF LAUGHTER AND FORGETTING
by Milan Kundera
Knopf, \$10.95

This is Milan Kundera's fourth novel, and like his third, *The Farewell Party*, it has been published only in translation.

There is considerable pathos in this circumstance, and pathos can turn self-consciousness into self-pity and wreck a book. Kundera has good cause to feel sorry for himself. In 1948, he was cast out of the Czech Communist party. In 1968, when the Russians invaded Prague, he lost his job teaching film students and his books were removed from the libraries. Kundera went to live in France in 1975. The Czechs revoked his citizenship in 1979 when the present book was published in French.

But one learns these details in a biographical note the publisher has appended. Kundera is not interested in a simple record of his own hard lot or a recital of Communist injustices: that would simply be aid and comfort for the virtuous West. He insists on the importance of memory, because without it the present is a "nothing moving slowly

toward death." Yet the remembrances he has put down are mostly invented pasts for made-up characters. He is appalled at how easily history can be erased—as easily as a traitor's face can be airbrushed from an old Party photograph—but his sacred texts aren't yellowed newspapers and ancient charters. They are old love letters and a Christmas poem an aged lady can say by heart.

This *Book* is neither a repudiation of the past, as the title suggests—madder music, more wine—nor a rough revenge. It is an inquiry into the springs of repression, illustrated by conventional stories, fantasy, personal reminiscence, and one saint's life as bizarre as Lawrence's *The Man Who Died*. Through it all, Kundera, writing in his own voice, interleaves a reader's guide.

In *The Farewell Party*, Kundera used bedroom farce to teach moral and political lessons. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* is not, strictly speaking, a novel at all, though some of the stories have a strong narrative and some are funny. It is the writer's contrary and endlessly refined ideas, rather than his plots, that make the pages turn. Translated from the Czech by Michael Henry Heim.

ELLIS ISLAND: And Other Stories
by Mark Helprin
Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, \$11.95

Following the death of his wife and son, a German photographer allows himself only the luxury of music amid the starkness of the Alps, a routine that enables him finally to rejoin the living; an Israeli soldier tastes both fear and courage as he waits to go into battle on the plain below; a ten-year-old boy witnesses "perfect, innocent" love on the eve of the Great War he dimly realizes will mar the complexion of innocence forever after; and, in the novella giving title to this fine collection, a young Jewish immigrant discovers, in the chaos and uncertainties of a New World, that selfless love is perhaps the only compensation for mortality.

While these and the other stories in *Ellis Island* represent an astonishing array of geographical settings, points of view, and narrative forms, the book is strongly unified. Helprin's characters have in common a heightened sensitivity to beauty and a simultaneous awareness of its frailty. Most of the stories portray people arriving at moments in which, as in war, values and

truths are crystallized and thrown into relief, to become inescapable parts of memory even as they are taking shape. And Helprin's prose throughout is at once lyrical and precise: he picks out fine detail as meticulously and accurately as if a telescope were trained on each scene. Though occasionally language and sentiment echo too strongly from one story to another, and in spots the narrative slips into an overly self-conscious tone, these are forgivable flaws. The stories in *Ellis Island* are more substantial than those in *A Dove of the East*, Helprin's first collection.

THE CHEER
by William Meredith
Knopf, \$7.95

What readers miss in most contemporary poetry is the sense of an ending, a conclusion to thought, a culminating cadence that leaves them higher than they began. Meredith is one of the few poets writing today who can exalt, and he does so through wit.

"The cheer,/reader my friend, is in the words here, somewhere./Frankly, I'd like to make you smile," he announces in an envoi to a collection that contains all his short poetry of the last ten years: "Words addressing evil won't turn evil back / but they can give heart." Meredith believes in civilization, in society with all its corruptions. "Some normal excellence, of long accomplishment,/ is all that can justify our sly survivals." So he celebrates the random orderings of society by speaking, paradoxically, of land, stone, trees, and, very often, rivers. He enters the paddock of society, the family, the state, without ever losing a sense of the feral realities outside it.

Poems in *The Cheer*, unlike those in many books of poetry, are addressed to people—poets, philosophers, presidents, and private citizens. Perhaps as a sign of humility, the book is heavily epigraphed by passages that prepare us to view the challenge of human fate as a game that can be smiled at, win or lose, because we can understand the rules. The order is not the order of decorum, but one created by challenge. "He told us / it is impossible to imagine our own deaths,/ he told us, this may be the secret of heroism."

Meredith's expression seems to take on the fixed smile of incantation, and it's a rare poem that does not leave the reader with his own smile of familiarity, a little miracle of transformation,

like "a jewelled/seafarer bringing water to the parched plain."

AMBITION: The Secret Passion
by Joseph Epstein
Dutton, \$12.95

Strangely mistitled, this collection of brief lives of the famous by the editor of *The American Scholar* might seem to show linkage with *Making It*, written by the editor of *Commentary* some fifteen years ago (with a sequel only yesterday). *Ambition* should have been called *Success!*—but that title was already preempted by Michael Korda, editor-in-chief of Simon and Schuster. What is it that editors want?

In his introduction, Epstein talks much about the passion that, through the green fuse of society, drives the flower of success; but in what follows he falls back on dozens of biographies of millionaires and statesmen, celebrities all, as though ambition could be discerned only in those famous enough to have earned chroniclers, from Henry Adams to Pierre Samuel Dupont (sic) and his successor du Ponts (they changed their name when they got rich); from Edith Wharton to Joseph P. Kennedy.

Yet the book tells us little about the passion itself. Something bland, innocent, inexperienced, pervades this story. Too many quotations and too many persons quoted, too many biographical examples and not enough thought (even in interstitial sections called "Curiosity Shop") about inconspicuous successes.

Symptomatic, perhaps, is Epstein's omission of the range of feeling explicit in two of the great literary sources for his theme. The first is *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, by Thorstein Veblen, who wrote with powerful caustic of the social energies underlying ambition. The second—emblematic of the side of ambition overlooked by this undistressing volume—is the omission of any recognizable reference to *Macbeth*, the tragic drama that tells us all more about ambition than we like to acknowledge.

THE STRANGE DESTINY OF RUPERT BROOKE
by John Lehmann
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, \$12.95

With the magazine publication of his five war sonnets, Rupert Brooke became something of an English popular legend overnight. And, subsequent to

his death in the Aegean the same spring, such disparate figures as Henry James and Winston Churchill were inspired to lavish rather embarrassingly mawkish and hyperbolic praise on the twenty-seven-year-old poet. Yet, with the emergence of the starker, more embittered works of the later war poets, Brooke became as sharply criticized as he had been excessively touted, his legend dismantled, and his poetry often largely dismissed. Neither extreme assessment permits a clear view of Brooke or of his work.

In this short but satisfying and surprisingly compelling life, John Lehmann shows us a youth at once devastatingly charming ("I have seen Shelley plain!" rhapsodized Ellery Sedgwick) and severely disturbed after a nervous collapse in 1911, troubled in his relationships with women, and irrational in his repudiation of Bloomsbury friends and their liberal ideals. Brooke was in fact a poet of promise but of uneven quality, at his best skillful and precise in image and meter and fiercely antiromantic in tone, at his worst given to empty rhetoric and vague sentimentality. His romanticized vision of war—a vision uncolored by combat experience—was seized upon by an English public desperate for ideals for which to fight an increasingly bewildering new kind of war. Lehmann provides a sensible, compact, and fair appraisal of Brooke's psychological development and work. At the same time he puts his finger on the unique feeling in Edwardian England that permitted the mythologization of a captivating but minor poet.

CLEANING HOUSE
by Nancy Hayfield
Farrar Straus & Giroux, \$10.95

One of life's less inspiring moments is certainly the morning after a raucous party, when one comes stumbling down the hall, not at one's best, to discover an awful chaos that for some incomprehensible reason is the result of deliberate choice. Even worse is the cleaning up, an endless process during which one wonders, crouched over the sticky spilled beer, whether order will ever be restored, and why it should be.

Unpromising as such a scene may appear, it serves neatly as the central metaphor of Nancy Hayfield's amusing and well-conceived first novel, the story of a young woman whose emotional life is in a state of disarray bordering on

mess. Caught at twenty-three in the classic dilemma—unloving husband, demanding kids, no friends—Linda is really struggling with the icy legacy of an aunt who brought her up to view cleanliness as the supreme virtue. It is Linda's unpleasant job to find out whether she even wants to straighten up, and what she will get out of it if she does.

Cleaning House is unusual in that it successfully combines the stomach-clenching realism of books about housewives in the suburbs with the wiseacre irony of coming-of-age stories. If it suffers a little from faulty pacing and narrow scope, it benefits greatly from Hayfield's delightful sense of humor (Linda's gardening neighbor appears with toilet plungers pinned to her legs as kneepads) and fine sensuous appreciation of detail. There is a clearheaded spunkiness to the writing that makes this novel a tantalizing debut.

PLA

THE DICTIONARY OF IMAGINARY PLACES by Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi. Macmillan, \$24.95. This guidebook, complete with illustrations by Graham Greenfield and maps by James Cook, is a most useful aid for the ambitious traveler, who is warned that the Royal Palace in Slavna, Kravonia, dates from 1820 and is "regrettably typical of the style of the period," and is advised to carry, when visiting Castle Dracula, "the usual array of silver crosses, strings of garlic and wooden stakes and hammers. . . ." There are, of course, some omissions. Gourouniphiles nostalgic for the great empress will regret the lack of directions to Blandings Castle, although that estate may have been ignored at the owner's request. The present earl is reputed to have inherited all his late uncle's terror of pignappers. Index.

WAYS OF ESCAPE by Graham Greene. Simon and Schuster, \$11.95. Although parts of Mr. Greene's memoir have appeared before, the book as a whole creates an effect distinctly its own. It begins where the autobiography, *A Sort of Life*, stopped—with the publication of Mr. Greene's first novel, which was not the first novel he wrote. He had taken up novel-writing at Oxford, "af-

ter the unwise publication of a volume of verse," and had concocted two clunkers before achieving print. Once an author, he never turned back, for writing, and the wide and wild travels it excused or compelled, were, as he realizes, a means of escaping routine reality. The present book is an account not of the author's personal life but of his writing life. He describes the episodes, places, and people that he converted into fiction, not always knowing exactly why. He is sometimes puzzled by a character who emerges from nowhere to disarrange a plot, and always slightly dissatisfied with the finished story. Reminiscence of this type provides an unusually clear picture of a writer at work, an exceptionally candid revelation of how this particular writer thinks about his work, and, thanks to Mr. Greene's elegant prose and itching foot, an absorbing narrative.

AMERICAN GENESIS by Jeffrey Goodman. Summit, \$11.95. During the past twenty years, archaeologists have turned up in North America human remains and artifacts that, if they have been correctly dated, are older than any similar relics yet found in Asia or Europe. Since the established academic view has been that humans reached this continent via the Bering land bridge only 12,000 years ago, these discoveries have aroused argument, dismay, and outrage. There have even been attempts to suppress information about them. Mr. Goodman has assembled the whole story in this lively and lucid book, arriving inevitably, given the evidence, at the theory that modern man originated in the New World and migrated to the Old. It is a case bound to fascinate anyone interested in human origins and to amuse anyone intrigued by scholarly civil war. Notes, bibliography, illustrations.

WASHBURN COLLEGE BIBLE designed by Bradbury Thompson. Oxford, \$65.00. The striking innovation in Mr. Thompson's presentation of the King James version is a format that breaks the text line by line into the phrases natural to the speaking voice, an arrangement that aids both comprehension and reading performance. The typeface is simple and handsome and the illustrations have been intelligently chosen to provide a history of Christian art as well as to ornament the book. It must be added, unfortunately, that the color reproduction is not always of the best quality. The paper, however, is, and guaranteed

by the publisher to last for generations.

EARTHLY POWERS by Anthony Burgess. Simon and Schuster, \$15.95. The narrator of Mr. Burgess's extraordinary novel is Kenneth Toomey, an ancient, highly successful British novelist whose homosexuality has led (not necessarily forced) him into a lifetime of wandering exile. Toomey's sister has married a third-rate Italian composer whose gluttonous, demon-chasing brother Carlo, a priest, has unexpectedly wound up as Pope. It is after this Pope's death, when a campaign is launched to elevate him to sainthood, that Toomey, as witness to an alleged miracle, is moved to reconstruct the story of his own life and of Carlo's occasional impingement on his affairs. All this sounds heavily clerical, but the story that emerges is nothing of the sort. It is more like an acid history of the twentieth century. It involves mischievous sketches of the literary great, all of whom Toomey has known; satirical summaries of the art fads of the time, all of which Toomey has endured; parodies of musical comedy lyrics, inane movie plots, and erotic purple prose, all of which Toomey has committed. There is even what amounts to a history of the gay rights movement, enlivened by the snarl and tinkle of homosexual jargon. There is also a great deal of action, some of it hilarious, much of it savage. Carlo, who believes firmly in the Devil and all his host, urges his congregation not to mourn the existence of evil, "but rather rejoice in the struggle to perceive the truly and beautifully good, in the great and divine gift of freedom to pursue the struggle." If Toomey's story proves anything, it proves that Lucifer definitely has the upper hand, a gloomy conclusion reached by way of memorably brilliant and entertaining prose.

THE TALE OF THE SHINING PRINCESS adapted by Sally Fisher from a translation by Donald Keene. Viking, \$10.95. At least a thousand years old, the fairy story of the exiled moon princess is a well-known favorite in Japan. This pretty book reproduces the illustrations from an eighteenth-century copy of the tale now in the possession of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, combining them with the English text, which makes for convenient reading but some loss of visual pleasure. Andrew Pekarik's notes on the pictures are informative. Mr. Keene's notes on the text are not.

DEATH UNDER PAR by Janice Law. Houghton Mifflin, \$9.95. Unsportsmanlike doings at the British Open lead to bloodshed around Saint Andrews in this whodunit, an engaging mystery despite the heroine's Gothic habit of wandering alone and defenseless at odd times in odd places.

THE FIND OF A LIFETIME by Sylvia L. Horwitz. Viking, \$14.95. Ms. Horwitz's life of Sir Arthur Evans, whose interest in peculiarly carved seals led eventually to the discovery of the forgotten Bronze Age culture of Crete, is written with a sympathy and admiration that do not preclude some practical revelations. Evans was as willfully pigheaded as any other rich Victorian Englishman, and fearless as well. There is much more to his story than digging up Knossos. Illustrations, bibliography, index.

A WORLD LIKE OUR OWN by Alison Jolly with photographs by Russ Kinne. Yale, \$29.95. The subtitle of this well-illustrated volume is "Man and Nature in Madagascar," and its point is that Madagascar, while totally unlike the rest of the world in many enchanting respects, resembles it in the endangerment of unique animals, wilderness beauty, and necessary resources. Dr. Jolly's report on the island covers the various types of countryside and the various ways in which people live on and damage it, but her conclusion is not entirely pessimistic. If some international help and understanding are provided, both the peculiar loveliness of Madagascar and its human residents can survive and prosper. Appendix, bibliography, notes, index.

I SAW TOKYO BURNING by Robert Guillain, translated by William R. Byron. Doubleday, \$12.95. A brief excerpt from this book appeared in the *August Atlantic*.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

LIFE & LETTERS CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew Ward is the author of a juvenile, *Baby Bear and the Long Sleep*.

Donald McCaig is a poet and novelist whose most recent book, *The Butte Polka*, was published last spring.

Jeff Wylie served as head of *Time's* Boston bureau and later as director of public relations at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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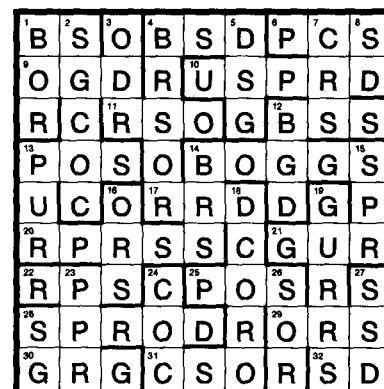
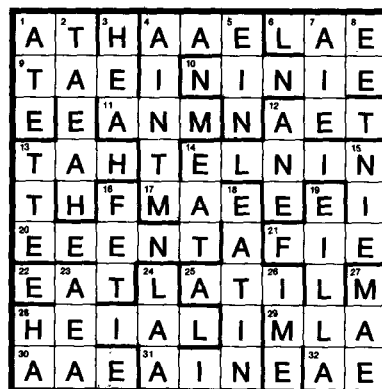
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

Classified Department

8 Arlington Street

Boston, Mass. 02116

Answers to the January Puzzler, "SCHIZOGRAMMATA"



Letters in the left-hand diagram are made entirely of straight lines; letters in the right-hand diagram are those featuring curves.

Across. 1. BATS (double def.) 4. ABASED (anag.) 6. P-LACES 9. TOGAED (anag.) 10. UNINSPIRED (anag.) 11. R(ANS)OM 12. B(ASS)ET 13. POT-ASH 14. BE(LONG)INGS 17. MARR(i)ED 20. REP-RESENTS 21. FIGURE (anag.) 22. RE-PAST 25. PAT-O-IS 28. SPHEROIDAL (anag.) 29. MOLARS (anag.) 30. GA-RAGE 31. CASINO (anag.) 32. SAD-E Down. 1. BO(A-T)ER 2. STAGE-COACH 3. OH DEAR (anag.) 4. B-RAINSTORM 5. DESIGN (anag.) 7. CAR(IE)S 8. SEE-D 12. BA(N)GED (anag.+n) 13. PUTTER (double def.) 14. BREAS-T (anag.+t) 15. SNIPE-R (anag.+r) 16. FORE-ST 18. DECORATION (anag.) 19. GUERRILLAS (homophone) 23. A-PP-EAR 24. CLOA-CA (coal anag.) 26. ISOMER (anag.) 27. MASSED (homophone) 28. SHAG (double def.)

The Atlantic PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

TV GUIDE

The listing below, purporting to show one day's selection of TV programs (some old, some new), actually consists of the 20 Across clues to this month's puzzle. The clues are strung together in haphazard order; solvers must place them in the diagram using the Down answers as guides. One of the Across answers and 14D are variant spellings; 16D and 19D are unfamiliar. Punctuation (especially in the TV listing) may be used deceptively.

ACROSS

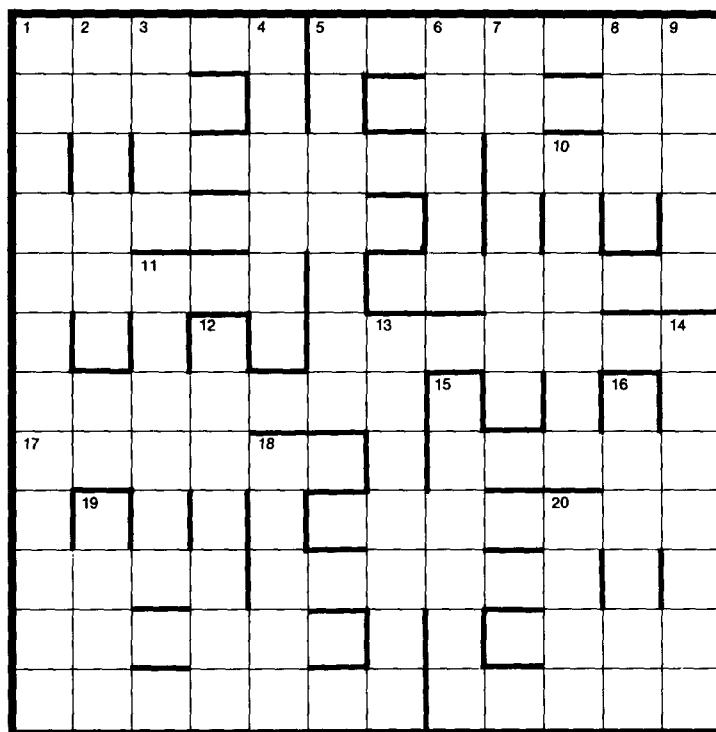
WORSHIPER (program's "Genesis")
FARMER: "Growing Things Takes Time"
PROPHET (coming from the East Church)
LITTLE RASCALS
ANIMALS' ANTICS
ROCKY
CASPER: "Ghost Trips"
BUGS: "Hare's Last Tale"
DAFFY DUCK
STUDIO TALKSHOW (hosts scrap outline and mime—cut short)
GET SMART
GREEN ACRES (R)
THE EDGE OF NIGHT
GAME OF CHANCE
FORTUNE (also cut short)
RUNNING DOE
MERV
GONE WITH THE WIND
GENERAL HOSPITAL (section

pieced together)
MASH
NEWS
FOREIGN REPORT: "Man in Rome"
HEE-HAW
PREMIER OF BOB AND RAY
STREET TALK: "To Secure Money"
POLICE DRAMAS (about a gambler's last bets)
JINX (gangster loves young women in SDS; lame caricaturing)

DOWN

1. Broadcast alters about fifty of the stars (7)
2. From bottom to top, visit favorite abodes (6)
3. People's channel (4)
4. One in factory makes plastic (6)

5. Communist member written up in secret communication (7)
6. Difficult question for a model (5)
7. Law enforcers' Southern control (7)
8. Lines from quarrels (4)
9. Device used by ships on a river? (5)
10. Compass in former dwelling? (6)
11. Leader of Trojans following Priam stealthily to a hollow (6)
12. Dog with one broken claw (7)
13. Call home (7)
14. Tiers of shops surrounding yard (7)
15. Left inside crate—spilled wine (6)
16. Pillars with a steel base (6)
17. Brittle \$100 bill rips apart (5)
18. A seaman comes up with one form of rope (5)
19. Acquire a tree (4)
20. Certain ruse goes amiss (4)



Note: The instructions above are the special instructions for this month's puzzle. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, write to The Atlantic Reprint Department, enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 99.

*If Spring is a young girl, she is gowned in mild breezes, sweet
by song and blossoms; she is a delicate bud whose beauty
unfolds with the verdant reawakening of Nature.*

Guy CAMBIER



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